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Mary Poppins

The Once And Future GLASTONBURY
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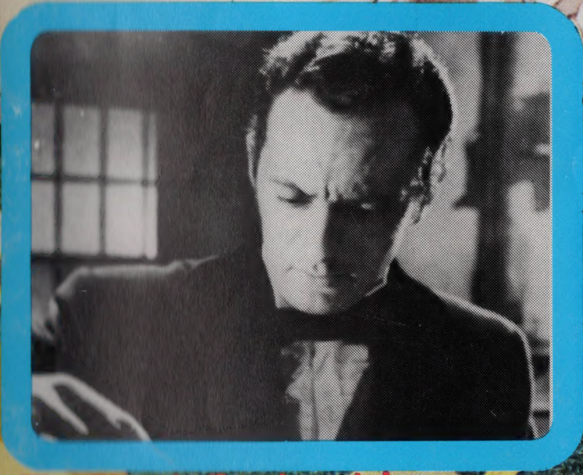

The Classic Frankenstein Of Hammer Films

A LITTLE BIT OF MERRY OLD ENGLAND

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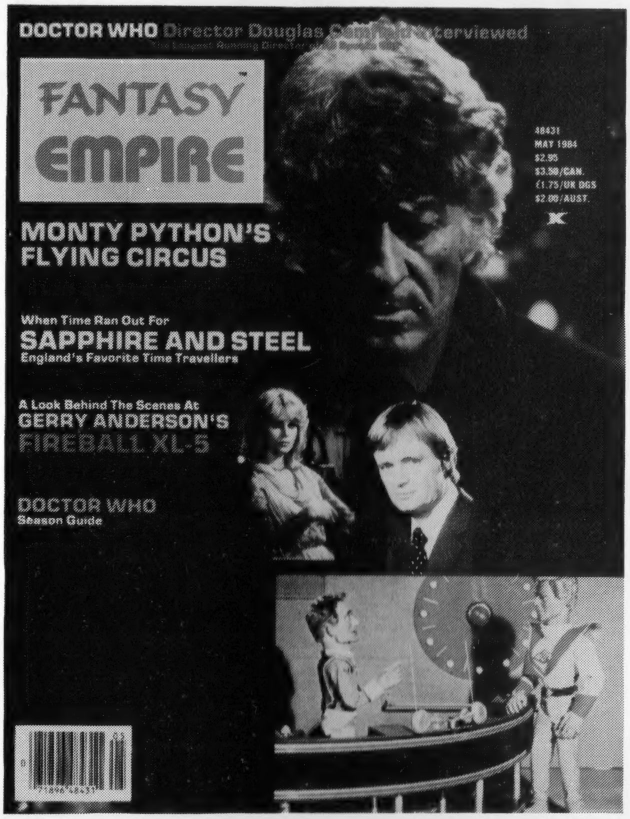
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Jean Airey introduces us to the new Doctor Who Plus a color poster of the New Doctor in costume.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Jean Airey
Eric Hoffman
Stuart
Randy L'Officier
John Peel

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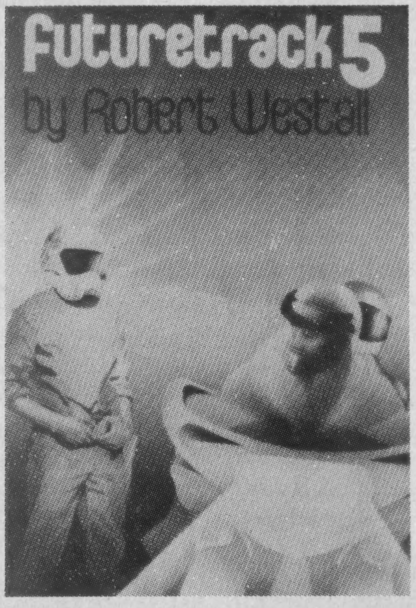
Bundles From Britain

It's always interesting to see a new publisher arrive on the fantasy scene, and 1984 sees the start of Bluejay Books in our field. The Publisher is James R. Frenkel, husband of sf writer Joan D. Vinge, and an amiable person to chat to at conventions. My wife and I met him at ICON II as he was babysitting, wife Joan engaged on a panel.

First title from the firm is *Dark Valley Destiny* by L. Sprague de Camp, Catherine Crook de Camp and Jane Whittington Griffin. Of course, de Camp has added many stories of his own to the *Conan* series begun by Robert E. Howard, whose life story the book tells, complete with stills and bibliography. Available in hardcover (and collectors' signed editions if you wish, for extra cost) the book costs $16.95.

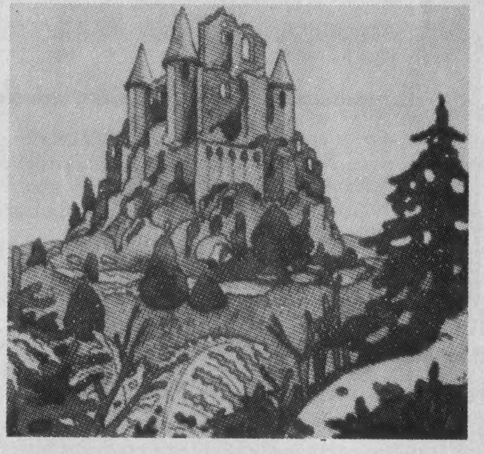


Also out in trade paperbacks are reissues of Harlan Ellison's *Deathbird Stories* ($6.95), Edgar Pangborn's *A Mirror For Observers* ($5.95) and Philip K. Dick's *The Penultimate Truth* ($5.95). Both Dicks and Ellison will be having future reprints in Bluejay Books.

On the newer side is *The John Campbell Awards Volume 5,* which includes stories by C.J. Cheryh, Jack L. Chalker, M.A. Foster and Carter Sholz. Poul Anderson adds an afterword on the life of Campbell. That's all for $7.95.

Greenwillow Books have several nice books in their Spring release list. Top (at least as far as I'm concerned) is Diana Wynne Jones' latest fantasy, *Archer's Goon* (192p, approx $9). Howard Sykes' father is an author, and has failed to deliver 2,000 words—now Archer's "goon" wants them—and his six wizard siblings want them too... Next is Geraldine Harris' *The Seventh Gate,* the final volume of her "Seven Citadels" series. I loved the first three books, due to her clear, carrying style and her vivid imagination, so I am looking forward to the final volume when the Savior of Galkis is finally revealed.

On a new vein for me is Robert Westall, whose new novel is *Furturetrack 5.* This is Britain in the 21st Century, and a small elite band keep the computer system going. Henry Kitson scores 100% in his exams, and is taken to become part of this band—but is not encouraged to question the system... On the re-issue side is Mary Stewart's *A Walk In Wolf Wood.* This is a werewolf story from the author of the adult Merlin series.



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OZ MOVES TO ENGLAND

Filming has begun on *Oz,* Walt Disney Pictures' $20,000,000 sequel to the Judy Garland classic, *The Wizard Of Oz.* Nine year old Fairuza Balk won the part of Dorothy. She left her home in the States to start filming the movie in England. Walter Murch directs and Gary Kurtz and Paul Maslansky are the producers. Fairuza will be the youngest actress to play Dorothy on the screen.

* * *

CAMFIELD REMEMBERED

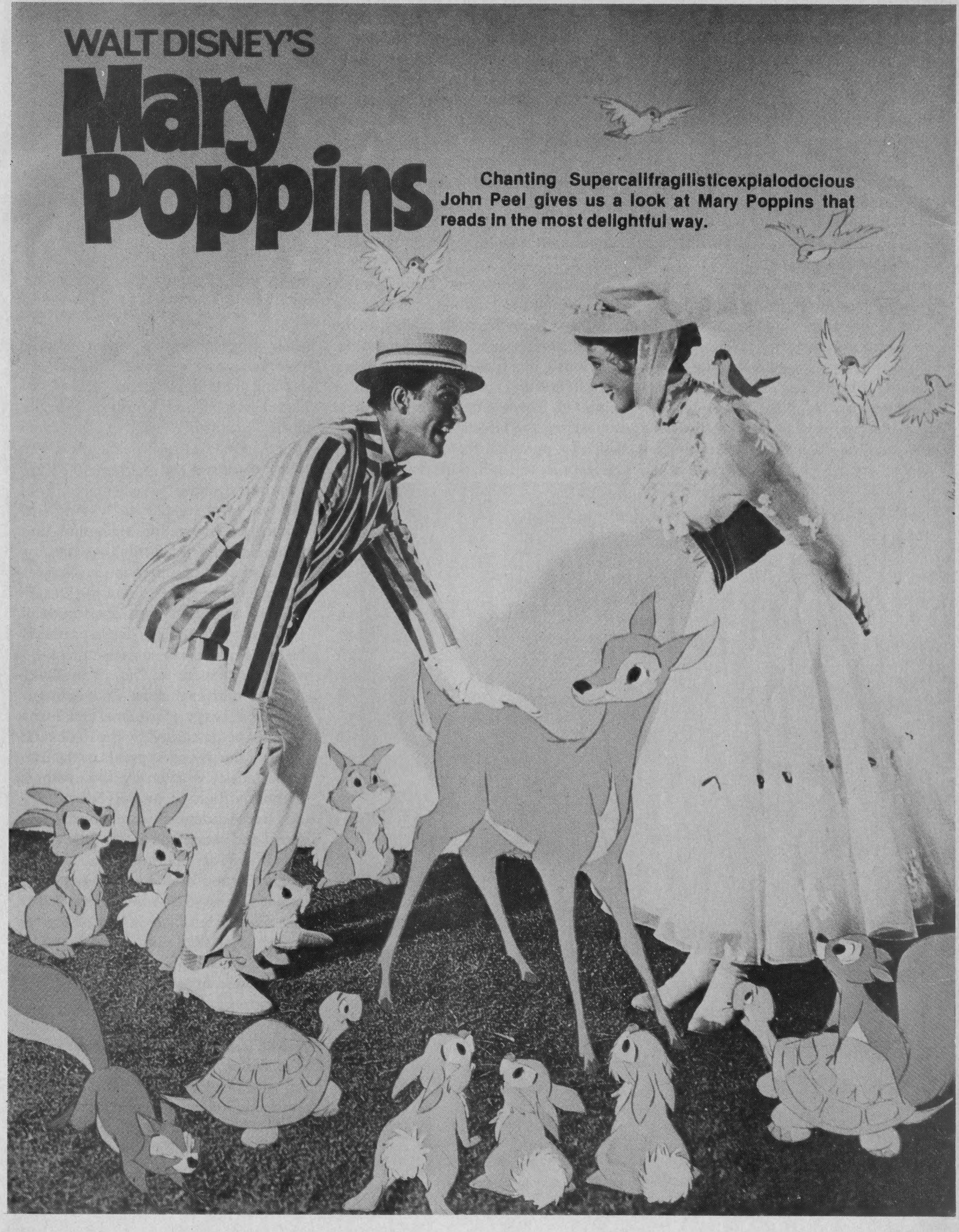
Douglas Camfield died suddenly on January 27th, 1984. He is perhaps best known for his directing work on *Doctor Who,* for which he had helmed the stories "Planet Of Giants", "The Crusade", "The Time Meddler", "The Web Of Fear", "The Invasion", "Inferno", "Terror Of The Zygons" and "The Seeds Of Doom". Other works included the TV movie *Ivanhoe* (1982) and the BBC classical serial *Beau Geste* (1983).

A final interview with him, compiled with stills that he supplied, appeared in *Fantasy Empire #11.* For such an inoffensive, self-effacing person, he has made a big impression upon a lot of people and will be greatly missed.

WALT DISNEY'S

Mary Poppins

Chanting Supercalifragilisticexpialodocious John Peel gives us a look at Mary Poppins that reads in the most delightful way.



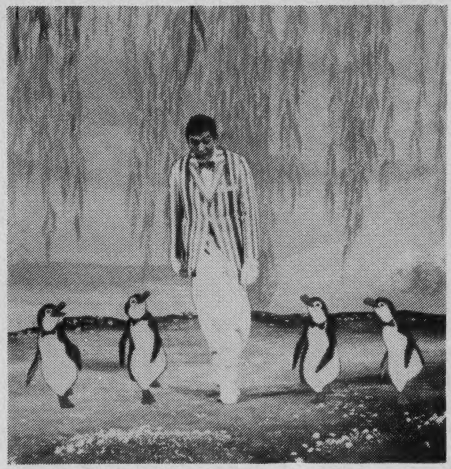
What multi-million dollar musical started its life with a $12 million copyright infringement suit against it? None other than Walt Disney's magnificent mayhem, *Mary Poppins*. It was not a good start for what is the best of all fantasy musicals.

Barney Young and Gloria Parker filed the suit, claiming that the song "Supercalifragilisticexpialodocious" was in fact taken from a song that they had published in 1949—"Supercalafajilistickespeealadojus". There was no further news of the case after this, so it was obviously settled happily. It was a very odd note on which to launch the musical.

The film was based about the books created by Pamela Lyndon Travers (best known as P.L. Travers). Miss Travers herself was technical advisor on the film, ensuring that some semblance to her characters reached the screen. Though Mary Poppins was mellowed somewhat, she was still allowed to retain her air of mystery and her acid wit. And Miss Travers was firm that the scriptwriters could not make the gentle romance between Mary P. and Bert (the match-stick man) into anything more serious. On the whole, she approved wholeheartedly of the film, which is hardly surprising—it improves and enlarges on her own novels in a most delightful way.

This was a high-budget film for its days (around $6 million), and virtually everyone with the right talents at the Disney studios worked on the movie. Obviously in a film about magic, some very interesting special effects could be expected. The talented Peter Ellenshaw supervised the effects work, which included a party on the ceiling of Uncle Albert's house (all done with wires), Mary Poppins flying down Cherry Tree Lane and a firework attack on dancing chimney-sweeps. (Some of Ellenshaw's best work turned up in the Disney disaster *The Black Hole* [1979].) One terrific sequence is where Mary, Bert and the children all disappear into a chalk pavement painting, and we are treated to twenty-five minutes of live-action and animation mixed cleverly and wittily together.

Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews) and Bert (Dick Van Dyke) take Jane (Karen Dotice) and Michael (Matthew Garber) on a "Jolly Holiday" in an animated/live action sequence. ©Walt Disney Prod.


Bert (Dick Van Dyke) does a soft shoe routine with four penguins. ©Walt Disney Productions

The mixture of animation and actors was one of the specialties of the Disney studios, who had been employing it since their earliest days. Perhaps one of the best sequences in an enchanting film, we were treated to Dick Van Dyke dancing with penguins, a merry-go-round that really goes places and a true Irish fox being chased by the Redcoats!

One of the strongest points of the film is the music. Written by the brothers Sherman (Richard and Robert), they won two Academy Awards for the best score and best song ("Chim Chim Cheree"). The Shermans had scored earlier Disney movies, including *The Parent Trap* (1961), *Bon Voyage* (1962) and *Summer Magic* (1963). Clearly, though, *Mary Poppins* was the peak of their achievements, as their later films have rather borne out—*Bedknobs And Broomsticks* (1971), *Chitty-Chitty Bang Bang* (1968), *The Jungle Book* (1967), *Tom Sawyer* (1973) and *The Slipper And The Rose* (1976). Arranger for the movie was Irwin Kostal, Academy Award winner for *West Side Story* (1961) and *The Sound Of Music* (1965).

The lyrics to the songs are clever and slick, and many of them were instant

Mary Poppins explains how a "Spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down" to an animated robin. ©Walt Disney Productions

and popular successes: "A Spoonful Of Sugar", "Let's Go Fly A Kite", "Feed The Birds", "Supercalifragilisticexpialodocious" and the award-winning "Chim Chim Cheree". My own personal favorite is the song that Mr. Banks is given, "The Life I Lead", when he speaks of "how lordly is the life I lead" and condescends to admit that he treats his "subjects, servants, children... wife, with a firm but gentle hand—*noblesse oblige*"! He soon changes his—er—tune.

Finally, Disney called on one of their most experienced directors to bring everything to a unified whole—Robert Stevenson. Born in London in 1905, Stevenson had worked as scriptwriter on English films, graduating to director (as on *King Solomon's Mines* [1937]). He moved to Hollywood in 1939, making such films as *Jane Eyre* (1944). From 1956 he worked with Disney studios, and was responsible for *Darby O'Gill And The Little People* (1959), Sean Connery's first starring role, *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1961) and *In Search Of The Castaways* (1962). Since *Mary Poppins*, he moved on with *The Love Bug* (1969), *The Island At The Top Of The World* (1974) and *One Of Our Dinosaurs Is Missing* (1975).

Selecting the right cast for the parts was vital for this film and Disney settled on the perfect choice for Mary Poppins herself in Julie Andrews. Famous in England as a singer on radio and TV, she had captivated the Broadway stage with her acting in *My Fair Lady*. When Warner Brothers came to film the play, however, they decided not to cast Julie Andrews, and Audrey Hepburn played the role instead. "Of course I wanted to play it," Julie admitted at the time. "But in a way it's a good thing having to play an entirely different role. People at least will know I can do an entirely different role."

Different it was, and she flung herself into it with exactly the right air of cheerful control that Mary Poppins required. One can easily believe that the nanny really is magical when watching the film. She has a way about her that suggests that the magic is simply waiting to burst out from her if she doesn't control it. One of the problems with the books is that Mary Poppins is not a very likeable figure for the most part—very stern and proper. Julie Andrews takes this, but infuses just the right touch of lightness to it. When she smiles (or even frowns), she still seems loveable—but strong.

Naturally, Mary Poppins is pivotal to the film, and one has to believe in her. Thanks to Julie Andrews, this is simple. Her wild dancing is a joy in "Step In Time", her singing is beyond reproach, her comedic timing perfect and the rapport with both Dick Van Dyke and the other actors in the film is firm. The film has to hold together about her, and it is to her credit that it does so admirably.

From her success as Mary Poppins, Julie Andrews went on to what was an even greater success—Maria in *The Sound Of Music* (1965). Since then, she has never been out of the film world, working mostly in movies by her husband, Blake Edwards. (At the time she made *Mary Poppins*, she was married to scenic designer Tony Walton, who was costume designer on the movie also.) Still, she has failed to achieve any role that has won her the kudos that the earlier film did. Movies like *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967) and *The Tamarind Seed* (1974) were mostly forgettable, and even successful movies like *10* (1979) and *SOB* were mostly known for their other stars (especially Bo Derek in the former), even though she tried to change her "goody goody" image somewhat in *SOB* by showing off her breasts. Perhaps the best movie she has made of late was the musical *Victor/Victoria* (1982), which rematched her with James Garner (from *The Americanisation Of Emily*, her second movie). Even there, though, Robert Preston stole the movie.

The male lead for the film is Bert. In the books he is a match-seller and pavement artist, but the film makes him a Cockney jack-of-all-trades, which is far more interesting and amusing. To play the part, the popular Dick Van Dyke was selected, to offset the fact that Julie Andrews was a virtual unknown. His *Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-66) won three Emmys, and was third in the ratings at the time of *Mary Poppins*. With his talent for comedy, mime, dancing and singing, he was almost the perfect choice for the

Bert tells everyone "Let's Go Fly A Kite" in the finale of Mary Poppins. *©Walt Disney Productions* role. He had only one problem, and that was his terrible Cockney accent. He simply did not sound English at all in the movie. (It hadn't improved much by his next "English" film either—*Citty Chitty Bang Bang*.) Still, this was a forgivable failing, as he was so perfect in every other way.

Bert is a butterfly character—very colorful, and unable to stay in one place too long. His occupation changes from scene to scene, but his genial good humor and common sense remains. He speaks to the children when they are afraid of their father's wrath, and to the father when he has lost his job and all that he thought life was worth living for. His affection for Mary is evident, but he hero-worships her, too. He is content to stand near her, and admire her perfection; she is quite content that he do this, too.

Father to the household where everything occurs is Mr. Banks, played by David Tomlinson. A veteran English actor, he had played in a number of light films, including *The Chitern Hundreds* (1949), *Hotel Sahara* (1951) and *Up The Creek* (1958). Disney changed his image slightly with his role as the villain in *The Love Bug* (1969), but he returned to his genial, if bewildered, father-figure in *The Water Babies* (1979). In the books, Mr. Banks is generally a likeable, if absent-minded and rather weak character. For the movie, this was thankfully changed to make him far more interesting. He is (as his name suggests) a banker, and he attempts to run his home like a bank, with rules, discipline and order. Naturally, his children rebel against his crazy tyranny (since he isn't too good at it anyway), and his refusal to enjoy himself. He and the children have a battle of wits, fought out over the nannies who come and go through the house like battle-casualties. Finally, the children get their attempt at a nanny with Mary Poppins, and Mr. Banks disapproves of the apparently frivolous and useless approach to life that Mary Poppins stands for. Mary tricks him into taking his children to the bank, where they are scared by the elder Mr. Dawes (played with gusto by a heavily-made-up Dick Van Dyke), who is only after Michael's twopence. A run on the bank results in Banks being fired—a splendid sequence, parodying a court-martial in the army; Banks has his button-hole flower destroyed, his umbrella turned inside out and a hole punched through the crown of his bowler.

Faced with disaster, he now gets another superb song to sing, "A Man Has Dreams". "A man has dreams of walking with giants/To carve his niche in the edifice of time/Before the mortar of his zeal has a chance to congeal/The

Continued on page 58

Bert adores Mary and Mary is content to be adored. The "Jolly Holiday" sequence combined live action and animation beautifully. ©Walt Disney Productions

IT'S THE MAN, NOT THE MONSTER....

HAMMER'S FRANKENSTEIN SERIES: PART I

THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN

By Eric Hoffman

Christopher Lee made a sympathetic Creature even while menacing young women in Curse of Frankenstein. *©Hammer Films*

I. IN THE BEGINNING

When Hammer Films made *The Curse of Frankenstein* it marked the company's departure from its usual output of black-and-white features. It also began a new chapter in the history of the classic horror film.

The movie was a first in one other way: for the first time, a motion picture based on Mary Shelley's novel was made in color, as well as against the traditional concepts for a Frankenstein film.

Until then, before it became the horror production company that most fans are familiar with, Hammer was known as a reliable producer of moderate/low-budget films that more often than not featured an American actor whose face was familiar to U.S. audiences (usually for the obvious purpose of selling the film to an American distributor). In some cases, one could suspect that the film's plot might have been built around them.

The usual distributor for the bulk of Hammer's B-picture product was the now defunct Lippert Pictures (founded by Robert L. Lippert). Once in awhile, another company, such as Astor Pictures, picked up a Hammer item or two.

During the early '50s, the company had made a stab at the fantastic genre, but the horror story had not been touched. SF was the thing. Lippert distributed *Spaceways* (based on the radio serial and novel by Charles Eric Maine) with Howard Duff, while Astor picked up *Four-Sided Triangle,* a highly disappointing version of a then-popular science fiction novel, starring Barbara Peyton.

It wasn't until Hammer made *The Quatermass Experiment* (U.S. release title: *The Creeping Unknown)* with Brian Donlevy, and *X—The Unknown* with Dean Jagger, that it began to develop the style that would very shortly come to full bloom.

When the decision was made to take the first step into producing color features, Hammer's James Carreras and Anthony Hinds had writer Jimmy Sangster come up with a screenplay that walked familiar ground, namely the most familiar of all boogeymen, Frankenstein. To direct the production, Terence Fisher, who had already helmed several of the company's earlier releases, was signed. According to Harry Ringle's article in *Take One* magazine ("The Horrible Hammer Films of Terence Fisher") when Fisher was given four weeks to make the picture, he held out for five. What emerged was a chiller that opened the gates for Hammer's series of terror tales that would make the company *the* specialist in quality horror for many years. In the opinion of many, it kicked off the rash of horror films that made up the "horror craze" of the late '50s and early '60s.

Curse Of Frankenstein was very definitely a gamble for Hammer. In fact, up until them, with the exception of a gag appearance in *Abbott & Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde,* nothing had been done regarding Mary Shelley's man-made creature for almost ten years (note that I refer to the Monster; Frankenstein himself and his descendants, not counting Illona Massey in *Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man* (1943), had not seen cinematic life since *Ghost Of Frankenstein* (1942)).

It is safe to say that nobody realized what would happen when *Curse* was unleashed upon the public, least of all the man who was to play one of the biggest parts in its success. In his talk at the John Player Lecture Series several years later, Peter Cushing remarked:

"No one connected with that first film had any idea that this incredible snowball would start and keep on rolling to this very day. It was just another picture in a list of pictures that they were going to make that year... it just struck some chord among audiences of which we are still hearing the twangs."

"Snowball" might be the proper term for what followed *Curse Of Frankenstein's* release but in the opinion of some people, "avalanche" would be more correct.

In its initial release in Britain, *Curse* opened with a special display of the "life-giving machines" and life-size blow-up of Cushing as Baron Frankenstein about to dunk a head in a vat of acid. It also opened up a series of reviews that ripped it apart. It was one of those films that the critics seemed to hate... and the public went in droves to see.

Christopher Lee made a grim companion when he ate lunch in makeup. ©Hammer Films

In America, *Curse* was picked up by Warner Brothers, which opened it with some good-old-fashioned hoopla: a 24-hour, around-the-clock Scream-A-Thon... constant showings of the picture at special opening theatres. Ads were dominated by an artist's drawing of the creature's head with a frightened, slip-clad girl. The catch-line—THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN WILL GIVE YOU NIGHTMARES FOREVER... It also gave Warners sweet dreams all the way to the bank!

Besides starting Hammer on mayhem and terror, the film also made the public very aware of four people: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Terence Fisher and Jimmy Sangster.

Christopher Lee was cast as the creature (note that the billing for the film as "creature" instead of "monster" and his physical stature did help make something of an impact, assisted by Phil Leaky's make-up, which hit audiences where they lived. Viewers were convinced that the thing they were seeing *was* the end-product of fiction's most infamous do-it-yourself project). But it was not this role that would link him almost indelibly with the macabre. Despite a moment or two, the creature was *actually* a limited, very one-dimensional character, and it wouldn't be until his next role for Hammer that Lee would come into his own as Count Dracula.

When he wrote the screenplay for *Curse Of Frankenstein,* Jimmy Sangster went against the traditional ideas that had made up the screen Frankenstein. Instead of following the same route that resulted in the monster being called Frankenstein, Sangster went back to the source of things and took a page from Mary Shelley. The Creature was made secondary and would become the result of the plot's developments. This time the spotlight would be on Baron Frankenstein himself. But instead of following Mary Shelley's basic concept to the letter (television would do that much later),

Continued on page 64

the sun never sets

EDITORIAL

This isn't where I would normally review a book, but I've just finished one that excited me and I want to share a few thoughts with you. The book is *Fantasists On Fantasy,* edited by Robert H. Boyer and Kenneth J. Zahorski (Avon/Discus, $3.95, 287 pages). The authors have selected essays and an interview by fantasy writers talking about their craft. The choices are clever and fit together, with different viewpoints and topics discussed. The editors teach a course in Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, and designed the book to be an introduction with comments from the people who know the subject best—the writers who create the material. But this is far more than a mere text book.

For one thing, it's valuable in creating fantasy. Ever wondered how Tolkien created Middle Earth and *The Lord Of The Rings?* Read why in his own words. What do other fantasy writers think of Tolkien's book? Peter S. Beagle (author of *The Last Unicorn*) gives you the benefit of his opinion. Katherine Kurtz talks about writing her *Deryni* series; Ursula Le Guin speaks of her highly praised *Earthsea* trilogy. C.S. Lewis, my favorite fantasy writer, speaks beautifully about why the fantasy form is so good to work with. We have a valuable insight by Andre Norton suggesting how a new would-be author could approach the subject. She gives a list of books that she finds particularly good.

Another section is devoted to asking what fantasy *is.* George MacDonald (author of the Curdie books and *Phantasies*) suggests that, while it is outside of our experience, it must obey its own logic and rules (I wonder what Lewis Carroll would think of that?). "It cannot help having some meaning," he admits. "A genuine work of art must

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mean many things; the truer its art, the more things it will mean." Who could disagree with this? All fantasy *means* something to the reader—but not the same thing to all readers. A book I may love and treasure may be boring or silly to you. G.K. Chesterton observes here that "I think the poets have made a mistake: because the world of the fairy tales is a brighter and more varied world than ours, they have fancied it less moral; really it is brighter and more varied because it is more moral." I find this especially true of the classic fairy tale. I've just finished watching *The Tale Of The Frog Prince* with Robin Williams and Teri Garr, and the whole moral of that story is that a promise is a promise, and must be kept—even to a frog. Every fairy story has a very pointed moral, which very rarely intrudes but is necessary to the plot.

H.P. Lovecraft speaks with feeling about horror in fantasy (as opposed to plain blood and gore); August Derleth, one of Lovecraft's admirers, writes about style in fantasy. One writer I have never heard of, Felix Marti-Ibanez, speaks beautifully of the need for fantasy in each of us. "The rest of us, in our hurried life, do not dream enough, and daydreams are important, for they are both the truest form of dreams and the modern counterpart of myths." Jane Langton deals with the form and content of fantasy, and Mollie Hunter traces folk-tales through fairy tales to modern book plots (and even *Star Trek!*). Michael Moorcock discusses humor in fantasy—which surprised me, because I have always found his writing to be so dull myself.

I was pleased and surprised to see one of my favorite humorists, James Thurber, present. In one short piece he discusses L. Frank Baum and his Oz novels, and in another he defends *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* from stupid criticism. Sir Herbert Read mentions *Alice* as not being a deep fantasy, but culture-tied. He cites the example of the story of *Goldilocks and The Three Bears* as a true fairy-tale. I was most amazed to hear that it was first written (in a slightly different form) in the 19th century—by Robert Sothey in *The Doctor*. I had always imagined it as a sort of timeless tale, told almost forever.

Everyone has their favorites, and mine is a piece by Lloyd Alexander, author of *The Chronicles Of Prydian* . "There is an exuberance in good fantasy quite unlike the most exalted moments of realistic literature," he notes. How true that is! Most of my own cherished memories from books are from fantasy works—who could forget the zany brilliance of *Alice?* Or not chuckle and love the lamp-post in the snow-covered forest in *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe?* Something within fantasy sparks almost a sign of recognition from us, as if we have always known it all of our lives—it is so *right*. "I suppose you might define realism as fantasy pretending to be true; and fantasy as reality pretending to be a dream." Ah... how many people do you know who lap up *Dallas* or *Coronation Street* and sneer at those of us who enjoy fantasy as if we were out of touch with reality? In fact, there is more real fantasy in one episode of *Dallas* than in a whole library of fantasy—and it refuses even to admit that it *is* fantasy. Given the choice, would you rather believe in beautiful, faithful princesses, or dirty, conniving oil magnates?

Fantasists On Fantasy is a brilliant collection—even when I disagree with an author. Ursula Le Guin on language for fantasy seems very narrow-minded in excluding so much. She seems to be asking for fantasy in an almost archaic note. No doubt she would disapprove of the very funny line in *The Last Unicorn* where Captain Cully offers Schmendric the Magician a taco; and of almost all of E. Nesbit's stories, because she refuses to accept any style into her books. No doubt she would hate Steve Boyett's excellent *Ariel* (Ace Books) because the unicorn has a line of profanity. To me, none of those examples destroy the mood—in fact, they often add to it.

I enjoy disagreeing with writers, too. The book makes you think about fantasy, and provides you with large amounts of diverting, expert and provocative fact and opinion on the subject. Buy this book. Read it. Argue with it. It can help you to enjoy your reading (and viewing) more. One last point I liked about it—it gives brief biographies of the writers involved. I know a lot about most of the older writers but very little of the modern authors covered, and found their little guides most helpful.

WITH BROLLY, BAWLER AND ENGLISH CHARM
AN INTERVIEW WITH

Patrick Macnee

Conducted by Randy L'Officier

Patrick Macnee was born in London, on February 6, 1922. His father was a well-known racehorse trainer, nicknamed "Shrimp". Strangely enough, Macnee is supposed to be a descendant of Robin Hood. Virtually all of Macnee's childhood was spent in public (i.e.: private) schools, including Eton where he went in 1934.

After he left Eton in 1939, Macnee went into acting and managed to get into a repertory company in Hertfordshire. In 1941, he joined a tour of *Little Women*, where he met his first wife. Then, the war started and Macnee joined the British Royal Navy.

After the war, Macnee went back to acting, reappearing in various plays, including *The White Devil, The Relapse*, etc... Instead of taking the "legit" route (theatre), he soon went into films, doing lucrative extra and bit-part work. He was, for example, a member of Sir Laurence Olivier's court in *Hamlet* and one of David Niven's supporters in *The Elusive Pimpernel.*

Macnee's career was without direction at the time, when a friend, David Greene, invited him to move to Canada, where he quickly became a star. To this day, Macnee still regrets having left his family to pursue his acting career overseas. In Canada, he played in *The Moonstone* with Christopher Plummer, worked with Norman Jewison, Lorne Greene, Barry Morse, etc....

We chatted with Patrick Macnee on a sunny Southern Californian beach. The famous actor was once again at a crossroad, as he was preparing his return to England, where it all started. In this interview, Macnee told us in his own words how he became involved with *The Avengers*, the show that truly turned him into an international star.

Patrick Macnee as John Steed of The Avengers.

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The Avengers John Steed talks about acting, life and a touch of fantasy.

She was the first—Honor Blackman as Ms. Cathy Gale.

Emma Peel (Diana Rigg) in the good old days....

FE: When did you first decide that you wanted to get into acting?

MACNEE: When I was about seven or eight. Most people do. I'd played Shakespeare's *Henry V*, uncut, when I was eight. We were always sent away to boarding schools and in boarding schools, you have to have an outlet.

I started when I was eight and I'm now sixty-one and still acting. In fact, I was at the Majestic Theatre in Dallas this summer, doing a reading of *Don Juan In Hell*. I found Texas very interesting and I was glad that I went.

FE: What was the first professional job that you had?

MACNEE: The first professional job was *Little Women* in the West End of London, oddly enough, and it was very nice. I met my first wife there.

FE: What brought you to the United States in the Fifties?

MACNEE: I emigrated to Canada and I was very lucky that that coincided with the early Fifties. A lot of people like Christopher Plummer, Katie Reid, Lorne Greene and many very good directors who are very well known, happened to be there at the same time and we all did plays on television. I did the first television play ever done in Canada in 1952. I worked for a man named David Greene, who's now won five Emmys, one of them for *Roots*. He invented the mini-series here in fact.

So, we had a lot of very highly talented people, by sheer chance. I stayed in Canada, then came to the United States. I worked in the Fifties in New York, with people like George Roy Hill, on live television. Our famous one was *A Night To Remember*, which was about the sinking of the Titanic. I played the designer in that. That was in 1956 and we did it live. We made the Titanic go down in a fish tank!

I was fortunate in having been slightly ahead of my time. Although it can trip you up sometimes. I was very lucky to be working with young, very clever people, who were gathered in various places at the time that I happened to be there.

Then I did a lot of work in Hollywood. I did two Hitchcocks and a lot of *Playhouse 90*. I did one *Twilight Zone* episode, which oddly enough was also about sinking the Titanic. I was quite proud of the work that I did then.

But then, I went back to England and couldn't get a job. I took a job as a producer with a man that I'd known here, Edgar Peterson. He used to produce television and he was producing a series in England about Sir Winston Churchill. He was making it as a western, which didn't please the English very much! He met me when I was dead broke. I was in the streets of Picadilly and asked if I'd like to be his associate producer. So I did.

We interviewed everybody from Montbattan to Churchill's cook and parlor maid. The fellow that had hired me sent a telegram off to Richard Rodgers, who was a chief shareholder in ABC—the company which made the film—which said "Too much music!" Richard Rodgers sent back a wire and fired him! I was left all on my own,

Steed (Patrick Macnee) to the rescue!

with John Schlesinger, who was unknown at the time, helping me. We made a lovely twenty-six part series, called *The Valiant Years.*

Then, Sydney Newman[1], an old friend of mine from Canada, rang me up and asked if I would like to help him out for a few months in a series called *The Avengers*, which was more or less the continuation of something else[2]. I said, "Oh, I don't think so. I'm a producer now you know." So, I asked for an outrageous sum of money, which they gave me.

I started out doing this *Avengers* with Hendry. Then, after nine months, there was a big strike by the actors, who were asking for more money. We got involved with that. At the end of the five-month strike, I was dead broke again. The man who had been employing me on the show said, "If you think that your strike is going to get you any more money, you're lucky. Five pound a week extra for you, or you're out!" On that basis, I worked for two years with Honor Blackman. Then, they decided to film it and she left with two weeks' notice, which I thought was a bit unfair.

It took them ages to get somebody else and when they finally did they fired her shortly thereafter[3]. She was too womanly. She had a big rear... Well, it should have been the other way around, with big...shoulders! You had to be a hermaphrodite to be on *The Avengers!* Then, they had more tests and eventually they got Diana Rigg. The two of us just clicked and it worked. They still didn't pay us any more.

After I'd been working with Diana Rigg for about five episodes, my agent asked if they didn't think they should give me a share of the profits. They said, "Share of the profits! No, he's out. We'll get a younger and better man." We were all very insecure in those days. Anyway, we finally agreed on two and half percent of the profits, which I think over the years has garnered me maybe a little more than five hundred dollars! But the show became sort of a cult.

The only reason it became successful, I think, is because it was different, although it wasn't that great. But suddenly, in the early Seventies, people in this country put it on campus as a sort of joke. It suddenly became known and they realized that it was done differently. Also, the women were representative, in a comic strip sort of form, of women coming into their own. Also, it was very stylishly directed and the people who worked on it happened to be extraordinary.

All those people contrived to make a show that was way ahead of its time. Of course, it's been imitated to death ever since.

FE: It's often held up as an example of good writing and clever dialogue.

MACNEE: There was no good writing, there was no clever dialogue. Di Rigg and I used to write all our own scenes because it was so badly written. It was written by Brian Clemens and Phil Levine as rather ordinary thrillers, to be honest. They chose very good, clever topics, like suddenly having a robot man way before people thought of robots.

But what we really did, and I say we advisedly, was to see what would happen if we took these perfectly straight stories and then made them ever so

John Steed (Patrick Macnee) investigates a Winged Avengers.

(Left) Emma Peel (Diana Rigg) is about to be cut from the scene—thanks to Kirby (Peter Wyngarde) and Syn (Isa Miranda). (Below) Steed (Patrick Macnee) almost gets "Cyrano's" point (Jimmy Jewel).

slightly ludicrous. Because we thought that life was ludicrous anyway, which it is. And, to stay alive at all, you had to be slightly mad, but you also had to be basically cool. We used that, we tilted it a bit, we made it funny, and the show worked.

More importantly, we wrote very good parts for other actors. So, the people who really made it were the other actors. There were marvelous actors playing parts which they made that much better. The show itself suddenly became much better. Also, they took a hell of a long time to make them, so they made them very well.

In England, they look on *The Avengers* as very old fashioned and it's the thing to knock it. It's in America and Germany that it's popular. In France, it was not taken up until many years after. We became a success in spite of ourselves. We used to get notices of the triviality of the show. When Diana Rigg took over from Honor Blackman, she was given the most frightful reviews. Naturally, now she's one of the great actresses of the world.

We used to fight against people saying, "Really, what an ordinary little show you've got!" We used to say that we were number one in the ratings!

The only credit I give myself is that, through being an Aquarian and seeing things slightly ahead of time, I have managed to be with people who are ahead of their time as well. They're usually younger people. That's why I want to go now and do it again in England, cause I can't do it anymore now here. You just get the same old round.

I'm doing a series right now that's about corruption in big business. It's called *Empire*. It's near old Watergate stuff and is a comedy. It's a half-hour sitcom and started in January. I played the head of the company. I shall do six episodes. I'm going to England now to play Friar Tuck in Robin Hood. During that time, I'm going to try to see who the young people are in England, as I've been away for ten years, and see if they'll have me. I'm going to try to find my Joe Dante in England.

I do find that fascinating about life—if one's always trying to discover new things, then it's fun. But to just sit back dwelling on the past… I mean when people talk to me about *The Avengers*, I'm delighted that people found it interesting, but to me, it's as if you suddenly said, "Didn't you get a first in history when you were at college?" and you say, "You know, I honestly can't remember!"

Now, I don't say that about *The Avengers*, because it's been resurrected. But, in many cases I'm still slightly embarrassed. In fact, I lost a part in the *Mississippi* TV series the other day because of it. A director, who had directed me in fifteen of *The Avengers*, said "Oh no, we can't have Macnee, he's too identified with *The Avengers!*"

The thing that I gave to the show was the endurance to actually be there.

Tara King (Linda Thorson) finds the victim of a very crash diet.

Which I had learned by slogging it out here. A lot of more important people wouldn't have taken the trouble. That's another thing I'll give myself as a virtue.

FE: Do you think that you would like to go back to producing and directing?

MACNEE: Oh no! Not at all. I did it once on a unique project. But I don't just want to go and produce. What do I want to go and produce *Laverne and Shirley* for? Although I think Garry Marshall is very clever. I don't want to do that, I'm just an actor. If you're an actor, you just act what comes along. That's really how it works. To be an actor, you're just on the end of the phone, you have to wait until people ring you up. It's the most humiliating job in the whole world. But, just to do it well occasionally is exciting.

FE: Is there any project that you specifically would like to do?

MACNEE: I would like to be in a very well made, funny, entertaining play that would be on in London or Broadway or both. That would give me an enormous amount of pleasure. Television, I view as a living. Movies, I'm never in anyway and those that I am in, if you take the titles and the type of them, except for *The Howling*, are mostly unreleased. And the inception of cable inflicts one's dreadful movies upon one. But I made them purely because somebody offered them to me.

I very much wanted to be in the big BBC production of Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*, but unfortunately they don't even think of me for that. I wanted to be in the *Tales of Pompeii* that David Gerber was doing. I wanted to be in the thing about Sadat that Lou Gossett is doing. Every single thing of note and merit they have turned me down for, for one reason or another. So, I'm now going back to England to try to create a new career for myself.

FE: What about the* Avengers *movie?

MACNEE: Brian Clemens produced such a bad script for it, two years ago, that CBS turned it down. I think other people are keen to do so. But I wouldn't be keen to do it, no. That was a thing of its time, it was a thing of the Sixties, and we were ahead of our time. It was lovely at the time, but now, I say let's do something in the Eighties that is ahead of its time. If I'm going to do a series, I want it to be new.

In fact, you've caught me at a time when I am trying to do some interesting things. What I have been doing hasn't been interesting. I've done them just because people have asked me.

In the last ten years, I've spent a lot of time with my children, who are in their thirties now, because I didn't spend much time with them when they were young. That's been good. I've lived a life rather than pursued a career.

****

The New Avengers—Mike Gambit (Gareth Hunt), Purdey (Joanna Lumley) and John Steed (Patrick Macnee).

---

[1] Sydney Newman is also the co-creator of *Doctor Who.*

[2] *Police Surgeon*, which also starred Ian Hendry.

[3] Actress Elizabeth Shepherd was first hired for the part of Emma Peel.

[4] Patrick Macnee starred in Joe Dante's *The Howling.*

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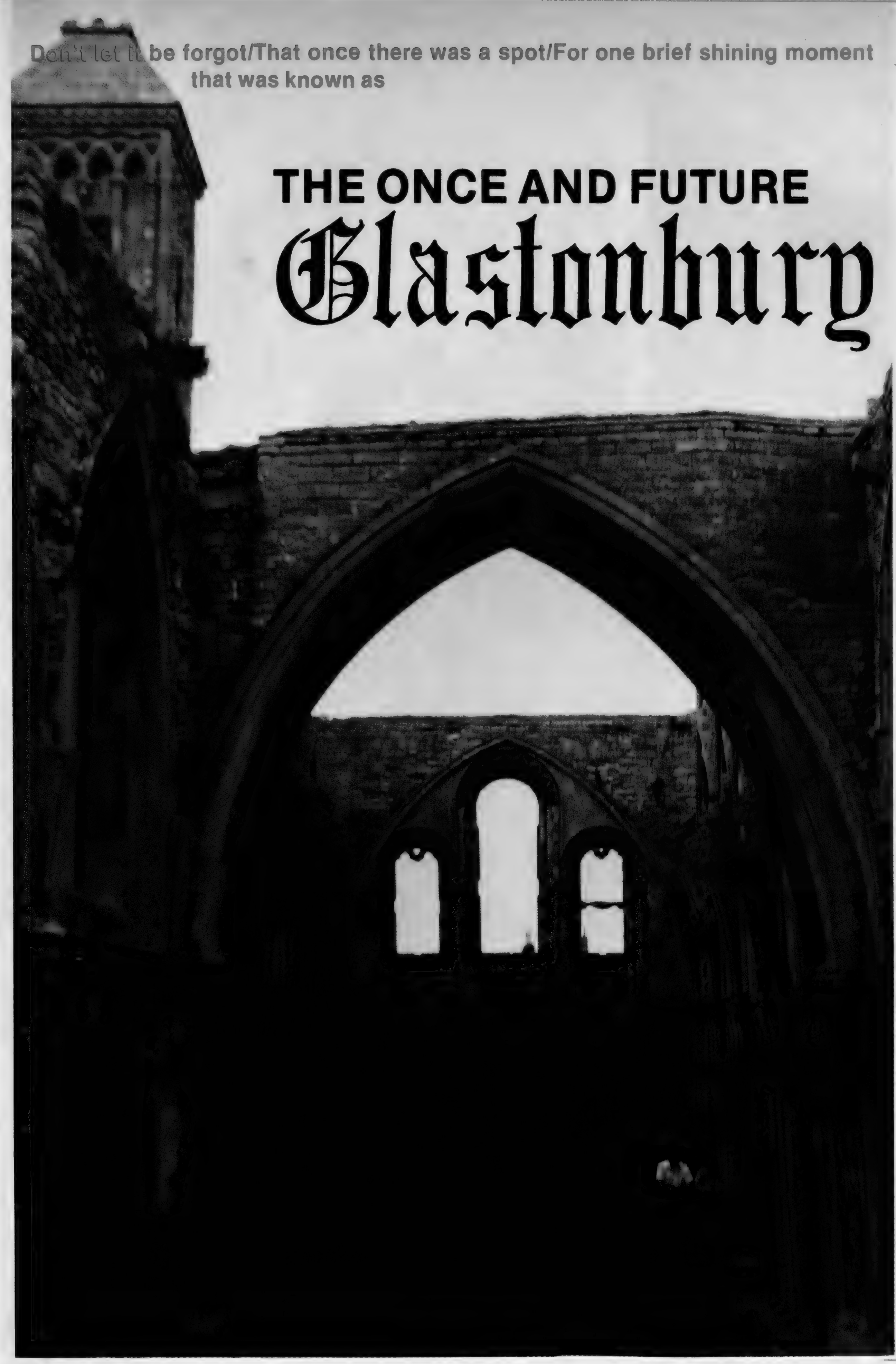

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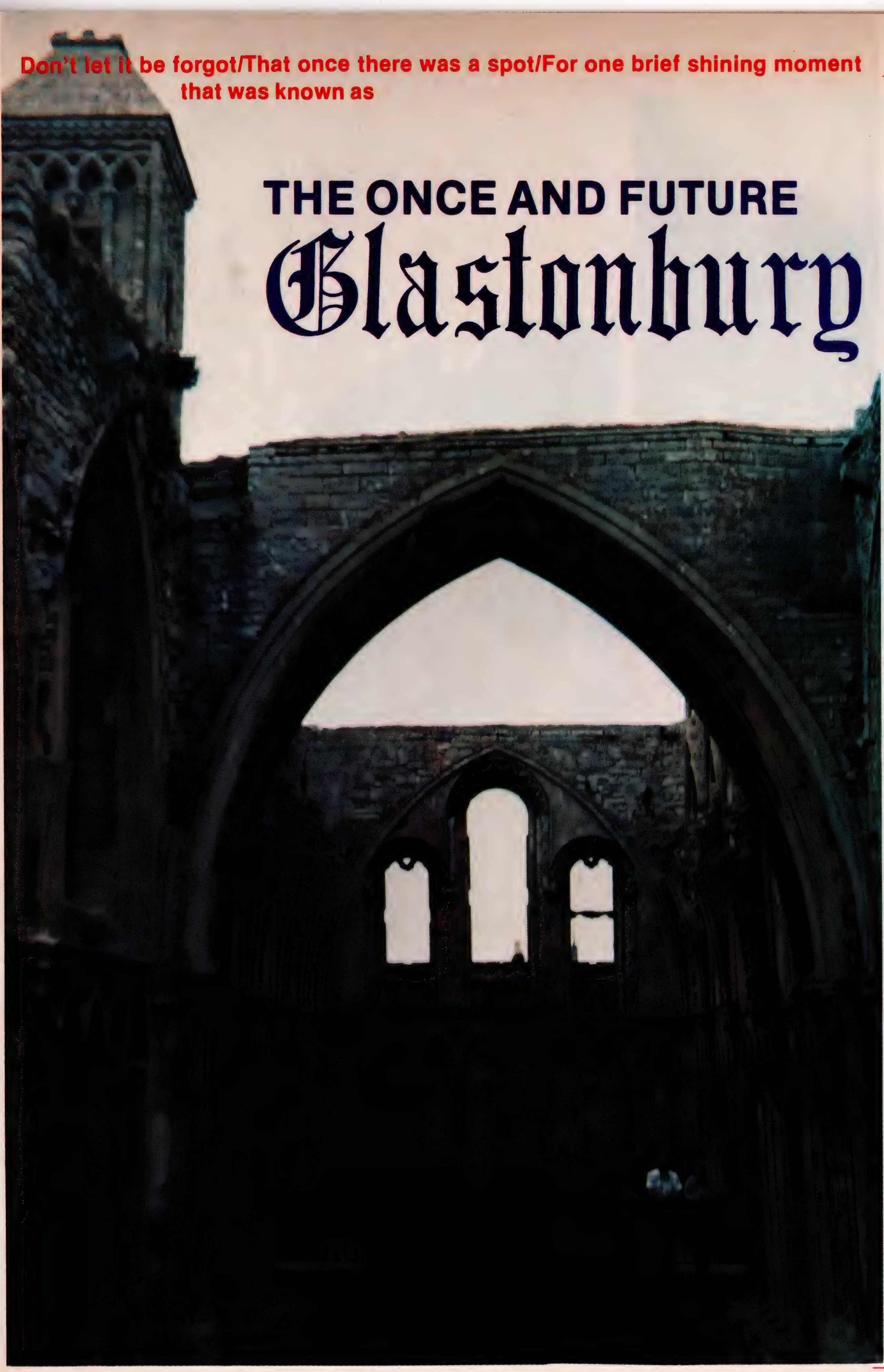

(Left) Site of King Arthur's grave. (Below) The abbey church looking west.

By John Peel

There are, of course, two Glastonbury's. There is the one that the tourist sees, the sleepy, rustic village with the quaint ruins that can be visited in a short day; then there is the legendary Glastonbury, a place of mists and magic, the oldest Christian shrine in England, mythic home of the Holy Grail and perhaps the resting place of King Arthur and his Queen Guinivere....

Glastonbury is a quiet Somerset town that lies amidst the Mendip Hills. From the Tor one can see for miles on a clear day, over the lowlands and streams of the area. From the Tor, the town of Glastonbury, with its ruined abbey and old buildings, lies clearly in view. The Glastonbury Tor is a famous landmark, jutting as it does above the much lower plains and with the incongruous tower of St. Michael's Chapel in its turn crowning the hill. The tower, all that stands, is the remains of a chapel that vanished in an earthquake in the Middle Ages and had, in its turn, replaced an earlier

Glastonbury Tor and St. Michael's Chapel.

chapel, also destroyed in an earthquake. Stark and bare, it stands against the skyline, drawing crowds of bemused tourists who clamber up the steep pathway, rest awhile to enjoy the view and then scramble down again. Perhaps the odd prevalence of earthquakes gave rise to the legends of something sleeping within the Tor, waiting its chance to come out?

Below the tower, in a pleasant, shadowed garden, lies the Chalice Well. The well is an ancient one, dating back to at least the 11th Century, and perhaps before, and has never been known to fail. In fact, during a drought in 1921-2, it supplied the entire town with water, as it produces some 25,000 gallons a day. The water, which every visitor is encouraged to try, is impregnated with iron, giving it a slightly unusual taste. It was reputed, during the 18th Century, to have healing properties. The rumor was encouraged by the notorious Dr. Dee and many cures were claimed for it at the time, though not often since. It has been speculated that the well may have figured in tales of the Holy Grail, famous as it must have been in a day when a good, fresh water source was valuable for both horse and rider. Frequently in the old tales, the knights of Arthur's court would stop at a well, where a hermit or holy man would have his cell. It is not too hard to imagine that the Chalice Well may have been one such place.

Moving on from the well, one walks past old houses and enters the main street of the town—a few shops, bus-stops and a number of good old English pubs that serve the traditional bar-food and old ales of the country. Just across the road is the entrance to the Abbey ruins, so one threads through a small pathway, past the Christmas thorn and into the broad spaces where the wrecks of the once-proud abbey lay.

The Holy Thorn is a very odd tree—certainly no native special of the British Isles. According to legend, Joseph of Arimathea came to Britain shortly after the Crucifiction with the cup that was used at the Last Supper. After a long and wearing journey, he arrived with his companions at Weary-all Hall in Glastonbury, where he thrust his walking stick into the ground to show where they would stay. There they built a mud and wattle church to God and remained for the rest of their lives. Joseph's cane miraculously sprouted into a flowering thorn that bore blossoms twice a year in Spring and at Christmas.

The origins of the Abbey are a little shrouded in mystery. It is claimed that it was founded by Joseph of Arimathea, but this is a comparatively late legend, not known to the earliest writers on the subject. William of Malmesbury, writing between 1125 and 1130 during a stay at the Abbey, claims that there was originally a small church on the site that was built in A.D. 166 by King Lucius (a mythical king of England—for details of his "life", see Geoffrey of Monmouth's superb—if highly imaginative—*History Of The Kings Of Britain* referred to in the first of this series). The great Irish saint, Patrick, was reputed to be buried on the site—but he was also reputedly buried on a number of other sites, too. There was undoubtedly Roman presence in the area, as the ruins of a villa, built between the First and Third Centuries A.D., have been uncovered. The Abbey as such was definitely started in the Eighth Century, with the royal blessing of Ine, King of Wessex, and thereafter grew and prospered, due to the associations of antiquity that the town had. By the time of the Norman invasion, it was one of the wealthiest churches in all of England.

The church continued to prosper through the Middle Ages, though an early rebellion against changing the style of singing left three monks dead and eighteen wounded...But the end of the prosperity was not long in coming. When Henry VIII made his famous break from the Church of Rome and set up the Church of England, he replenished his coffers by dissolving a large number of monasteries and appropriating their funds. One of these was Glastonbury. The monks were evicted, the Abbey stripped, and left to go to ruin. Many locals quarried the Abbey for stones (some of which may line the pit in the Chalice Well), and what was finally left for the centuries was a husk of what glories had once

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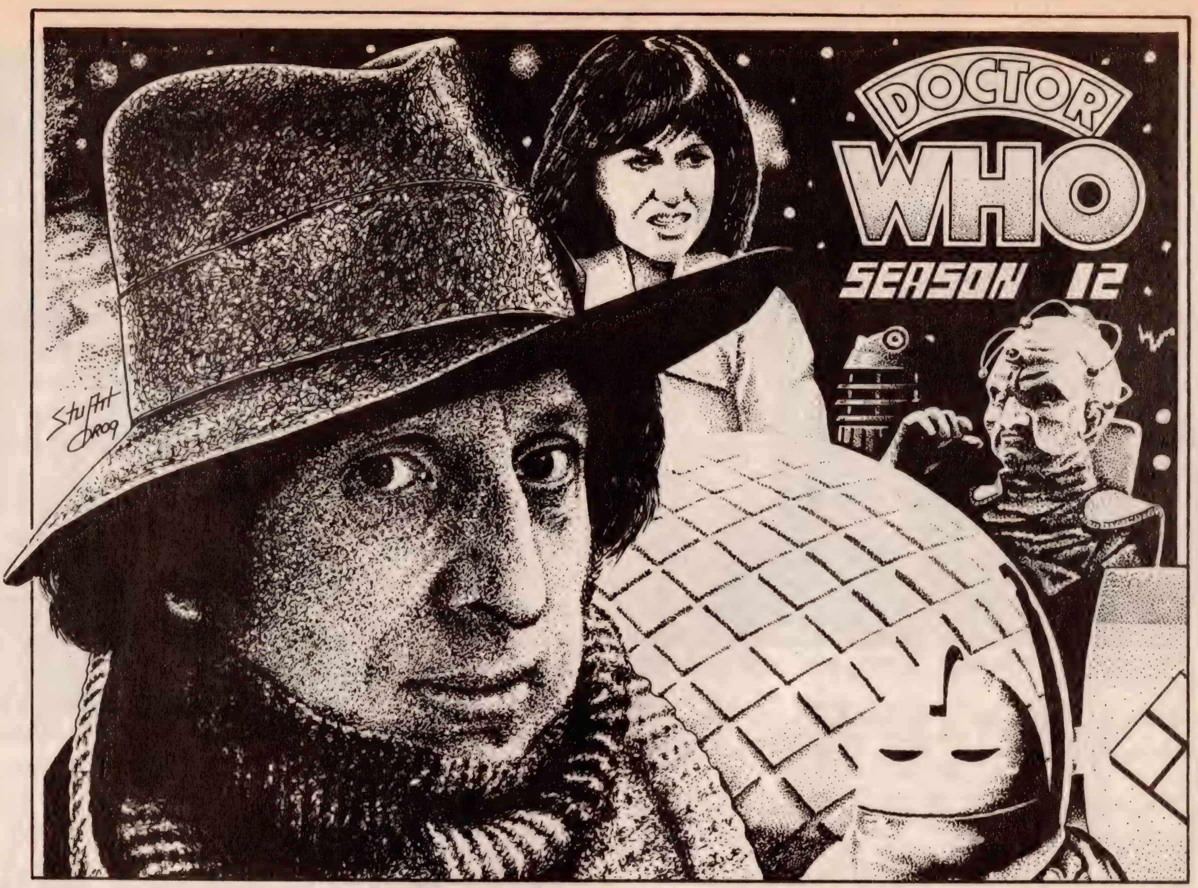


By John Peel

UNIT, the mainstay of the show during the previous five years, was to be finished with almost for good. The Brigadier and his men appeared in the first story only, which served to introduce the incoming Doctor and his new companion, and then the organisation wasn't seen until the first story of Baker's second season. The ties to the 20th Century, so strong in the Pertwee era, were being shattered. From now on, most of the modern-day stories would not feature UNIT at all, even in name. The Doctor was far more of a wanderer than he had previously been for five years. His ties were now almost cut with the Earth and the modern day, the only real links being his two travelling companions.

The addition of the second companion was also a novelty. It had been five years since three people travelled in the Tardis on a regular basis, and though the team wasn't to last beyond the first season with the new Doctor, it was a tremendously viable one. Sarah Jane Smith, the adventurous journalist from the previous season continued to travel with the Doctor, and was still played by the talented Elisabeth Sladen. Indeed, with the new Doctor, Sarah seemed to blossom out, getting better lines and developing as a character. Her inter-reactions with the Doctor and her other companion were very realistic, and one had the impression of a fairly close-knit family in space. The new companion was Lieutenant-Surgeon Harry Sullivan, introduced in "Robot" as UNIT's new medical officer. He is called in to treat the regenerating Doctor and is whisked off in the Tardis at the end of the story. The idea was for Harry to be the strong, athletic (if not overly bright) young man, his role being created when it wasn't decided who the new Doctor would be. It was felt that if the new actor who would play the Doctor was elderly, then he would need a strong right-arm to keep him in action. As it turned out, a younger actor was cast as the Doctor and Harry's role became rather superfluous, so it was discontinued the following season. Harry was played by Ian Marter, no newcomer to *Doctor Who*. Ian had played in the Jon Pertwee story, "Carnival Of Monsters", as Andrews (1973), another sea-farer. His acting had impressed the production staff, and they had brought him back for the role of Harry.

Strangely enough, though Ian left the role after one year his involvement with the show did not cease. He had expressed an interest in writing for *Doctor Who*, and has even written the script for a proposed movie with Tom Baker—*Doctor Who Meets Scratchman* (an old name for the Devil). Though the movie had gotten as far as design and casting, with Vincent Price eager to play Scratchman, the funds never really came and the project was abandoned. However, Ian's writing did not stop there. The editor of Target Books offered him the chance of writing novelisations of the TV show and he happily obliged with a well-received novelisation of one of the stories from the Twelfth Season, "Ark In Space". He followed this up with "The Sontaran Experiement", also from this season, which he fleshed out quite considerably from the two-part TV story. Since then he has also written "The Ribos Operation" from the Baker Series, "Enemy Of The World" from Troughton's era and "Earthshock" from Peter Davison's season. Further books are planned, as he really enjoys the work.

Obviously, however, the central change that was clear to all was that of the Doctor himself. Gone was the

The new Doctor (Tom Baker) is out in his faithful roadster, Bessie, helping UNIT with their latest problem. "Robot" ©BBC

dashing, flamboyant Pertwee, with his fast cars and odd machines, and in his place was... Well, how to describe the new Doctor?

"Bohemian" is Terrance Dicks' favorite description in the books. Dressed rather sloppily in a pair of battered trousers a little on the baggy side, with an old pullover, sometimes a jacket, and inevitably a long outer coat; then there were his trade-marks—the battered felt hat and the long, multicolored scarf that seemed to grow from story to story... Add to that a face that was "all teeth and curls", and the end result was a little odd to say the least. The fourth Doctor had elements of all of the previous three—Hartnell's arrogance ("If I'm right," he told one person, "and I invariably am"), Troughton's whimsy and jelly babies, (he snatches one back from Harry when the latter has the nerve to contradict him) and Pertwee's casual ease at taking control of the situation. But he added to that a zest purely of his own making—an air of almost permanent bewilderment and insanity. No one quite knew what to make of the new Doctor.

As Sarah tries to explain: "He talks to himself sometimes because he's the only one who knows what he's talking about." This is true, but one can't help but wonder if he really *does* know what he's talking about. For example, he credits his scarf to Madame Nostradamus and calls her "a witty little knitter", but is he just pulling our collective legs? Who can tell? He tells the truth, jokes and lies with the same expression or lack thereof. The new Doctor is a law unto himself, though occasionally he deigns to reveal himself. "It might be irrational of me," he admits, "but human beings are quite my favorite species."

The choice of an actor for the new role was an easy one. After a long time trying to get the right actor, Terrance Dick and Barry Letts settled on Tom Baker after seeing his portrayal of Koura in the film *The Golden Voyage Of Sinbad* (1973). There they had both been much impressed by his terrific screen presence and he was offered the role. The story is old, but true, that he was out of work as an actor and engaged in carrying bricks on a building site at the time. (See our interview with Terrance Dicks in the *Summer '83 Special* and the *Tom Baker Special* for further information on the career of the actor.) His other film credits had included a superb Rasputin in *Nicholas And Alexandra* (1971), a rather odd nude scene in Pasoline's *The Canterbury Tales* (1971), two horror movies, *The Vault Of Horror* (also known as *Tales From the Crypt II*)(1971) and *The Mutations* (1973) and one TV movie, *Frankenstein: The True Story* (1973). He approached the part of *Doctor Who* most eagerly and promptly suffused it with his own energy and vitality.

With the actor now settled, the next necessity was the new production team. Both Terrance Dicks and Barry Letts had decided to move on from the show and replacements for them were badly needed. For script-editor, the choice was a very fitting and far-sighted one—Robert Holmes. Holmes had worked on the show since writing "The Krotons" (1968) for the Troughton final season. The script had not originally been for a *Doctor Who* story, but had been adapted when he couldn't sell it in its original form. From that sale, he had begun a long association with the show. He followed it up with "The Space Pirates" (1968), "Spearhead From Space" (1970), the introductory Jon Pertwee story, "Terror Of The Autons" (1971), which introduced both the Master and the new companion, Jo Grant, "The Carnival Of Monsters" (1973) and "The Time Warrior" (1973), which introduced Sarah. An able and well-liked author, he continued to pen

The robot (Michael Kilgarriff) comforts his only friend, Sarah (Elisabeth Sladen) ©BBC

"Ark In Space" The Doctor (Tom Baker) demonstrates one way of testing for gravity... with a yo-yo
©BBC

stories for the show even after the end of his tenure as script-editor and penned the regeneration story between Peter Davison and Colin Baker. He has worked on many other shows, and has also script-edited the novel private eye series *Shoestring*.

The new producer was Philip Hinchcliffe. There are two sorts of directors, those who engage their creative abilities and steam ahead and those who pay heed to the opinions of everyone else on how to make a show. Hinchcliffe quite firmly set his goals and stuck to them as he produced *Doctor Who*. Several complaints had been received in the past as to the violence in the show, but they were almost nothing compared to the complaints leveled against the Hinchcliffe era. He and Robert Holmes brought more realism and violence into the show and frequently elements of horror also. They parodied a number of famous sf and horror movies (for example, the title character in "Robot" has a malfunction very similar to that of Robbie in *Forbidden Planet* and the story also contained references to *King Kong* and *The Day The Earth Stood Still*). This was extremely popular with the viewers and the ratings of the show soared. Despite the criticism, more and more people were watching it and so it became almost acceptable (ignoring the odd comment from the National Viewers and Listeners Association on the corpse-robbings, violent deaths, strangulations, drownings and so forth).

Though a lot of the horror and criticism was yet to come, the first Baker season was certainly not for the squeamish. We were treated to men being stomped by giant robots, men being mutated into alien insects, Cybermen strangling people, rather vivid shots of people being mown down by machine guns and astronauts undergoing torture sessions. The kids loved it and the adults did too. The average viewing age rose appreciably, which future producers were to make the most of.

The Twelfth Season had a number of serious problems, however. Most importantly the BBC was having one of its periodic economy drives and the budget for *Doctor Who* was cut to a bare minimum. To reduce costs, the Tardis interior was never shown and so the beautiful control room was never seen in this season. It would return in the next, however. Also, in order to save money, the same sets were utilised for two different stories, due to a connecting theme running through several of the stories. "Ark In Space" introduced us to a space station *Nerva*, with its gleaming interiors and the final story, "Revenge Of The Cybermen" returned us to the beacon, though in the past as viewed from the first story. Minimal changes could thus be made to the sets and the stories were filmed back-to-back, though shown at different spaces in the show (in England, at least).

Another paradoxical way of saving money was filming on location. Paradoxical because in the early years of the show very little location work was done, due to its being more expensive than studio work! In fact a lot of the supposedly exterior sequences were filmed on sets in the studio. Now, however, due to improvements in technology and filming techniques, it became cheaper to go on location whenever possible. Due to production problems with "The Ark In Space", an extra story was added to the season, "The Sontaran Experiment", as a fill-in in their schedule, and what was intended to be the final story of the first season, "Terror Of The Zygons" was held over until the start of the following season.

Another of Philip Hinchcliffe's changes was to shorten the individual stories though still using the 26 week format. Under his control, there would be 6 stories to the season, consisting of five 4-part stories and a 6-parter to finish the season. With the Pertwee era, the 6-parter tended to be more the norm, with the occasional 4-parter to space them out. Hinchcliffe felt that four weeks was better pacing for a story, as a lot of the previous longer stories had been rather obviously padded and this led to audience boredom.

Despite the production problems and the shorter season, the Twelfth season was an undoubted success and Tom Baker became established as a worthy successor to the energetic and popular Pertwee. Earlier, Time-Life Television had purchased a batch of the Pertwee stories which it had attempted to market in the USA, but without great success. However, when the Tom Baker seasons were offered, it seemed that Baker was far more popular with the American audience and the series really began to catch on. So much so with the later Bakers purchased by Lionheart, that Lionheart even began to remarket the Pertwee adventures and to include the first Davison seasons in their package.

Apart from adding the voice-overs of Howard da Silva (for no real reason in the most part and obscuring part of the soundtrack in several cases), Time-Life made one mistake with the show. The stories were numbered in their production order and not the order in which they should be viewed. As a result, when Time-Life presented their package, they reversed this and marketed them in number order. In reality the series ran as per this article and not as Time-Life's listing: "Robot", "Ark In Space", "The Sontaran

"The Ark In Space" The Doctor (Tom Baker) and Sarah (Elisabeth Sladen) await a new attack by the Wirrn. ©BBC

Experiment", "Genesis Of The Daleks" and "Revenge Of The Cybermen".

December 28th, 1974—May 10th, 1975

THE TWELFTH SEASON

Regular Cast

The Doctor	Tom Baker
Sarah Jane Smith	Elisabeth Sladen
Harry Sullivan	Ian Marter

Regular Crew

Producer	Barry Letts ("Robot" only) Philip Hinchcliffe ("Ark In Space" on)
Script Editor	Robert Holmes
Title Sequence	Bernard Lodge
Music	Dudley Simpson
Production Unit Manager	George Gallacia
Special Sound	Dick Mills

4A) Robot

By Terrance Dicks (4 episodes)(December 28th, 1974—January 18th, 1975)

CAST

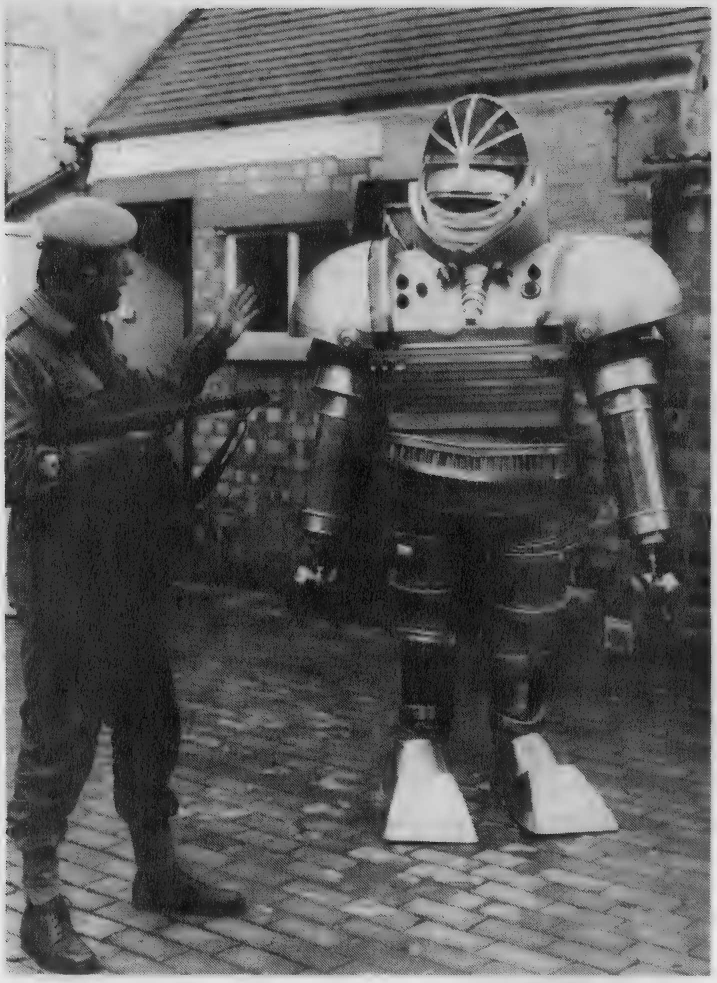
Brig Lethbridge Stewart	Nicholas Courtney
R.S.M. Benton	John Levene
Jellicoe	Alec Linstead
Miss Winters	Patricia Maynard
Professor Kettlewell	Edward Burnham
The Robot	Michael Kilgarriff
Short	Timothy Craven

CREW

Production Assistant	Peter Grimwade
Visual Effects	Clifford Culley
Designer	Ian Rawnsley
Lighting	Nigel Wright John Mason
Makeup	Judy Clay
Costume	James Acheson
Sound	Trevor Webster Vic Goodrich

The Doctor has just regenerated and Harry Sullivan, the new medical officer of UNIT, takes charge of him. Meanwhile, something big, nasty and deadly breaks into a top secret weapons research establishment and takes plans for a disintegrator gun. When the Doctor attempts to leave in the Tardis, Sarah tells him of the mystery to persuade him to stay behind awhile. Whilst the Robot starts to steal the components for the gun, the Doctor, Harry and the Brigadier begin to investigate.

Sarah visits Thinktank, where she meets the icy director, Miss Winters, and her assistant, Jellicoe. Thinktank deals with the frontiers of scientific research, she is told. In fact, they pioneered work on the missing plans for the disintegrator. Sarah sees Kettlewell's empty robotics section. Kettlewell left the place to go and work on alternate technology, she is told, and the place is no longer used. But there are fresh oilstains on the floor... Sarah goes to see Kettlewell, who is disturbed over the thought that his robot may not have been dismantled, so she returns to Thinktank, where she is apparently attacked by the robot. It is, in fact, a pointed lesson from Miss Winters to keep her nose out of their business. The robot, K1, is intended to replace humans in difficult or dangerous tasks—like mining, or work involving radiation. When ordered to kill Sarah, the robot has a mental seisure, as it is programmed to help humanity, not to harm it. Sarah feels that it is being mistreated and sympathises with it, to Miss Winter's withering scorn.



Naturally, she reports all of this to UNIT, and the Brigadier plants Harry on the establishment to gather facts. The Doctor decides to talk to Kettlewell about the robot and he learns that it has its creator's brain patterns. Meanwhile, the "child" robs and kills Chambers, a cabinet minister. From his safe he steals the missile codes to override all of the ICBM missiles in the world, which could set off the next, and final, war. Sarah finds out about the SRS—Scientific Reform Society—which wants to remake the world their own logical way. Winters, Jellicoe and many Thinktank people are members and even Kettlewell was, once.

The robot is taking his problems to his creator—he needs help badly. Though Winters has tried to convince it that by the killings it is doing, it is helping humanity in the long run, the robot is troubled. Kettlewell calls the Doctor, who promises a house call, but Miss Winters and Jellicoe arrive first... When the Doctor arrives, the robot attacks him, but it stops short of killing him when Sarah protects the Doctor and tries to argue the robot out of murder. UNIT attacks, the robot retreats and Kettlewell is rescued.

Made voluble by the excitement, Kettlewell tells them that the robot is made of living metal, which is capable of growth. He also mentions another of his inventions, a metal virus, intended to break down waste material. He agrees to smuggle Sarah in to the SRS meeting that night. Miss Winters addresses the meeting—and it turns out that Kettlewell is really in her power and on her side. The robot enters and captures Sarah. The Doctor's rescue attempt fails, but the Brigadier's raid doesn't. Though many are rounded up in the raid, Winters, Jellicoe and Kettlewell escape with the robot and take Sarah along as a hostage.

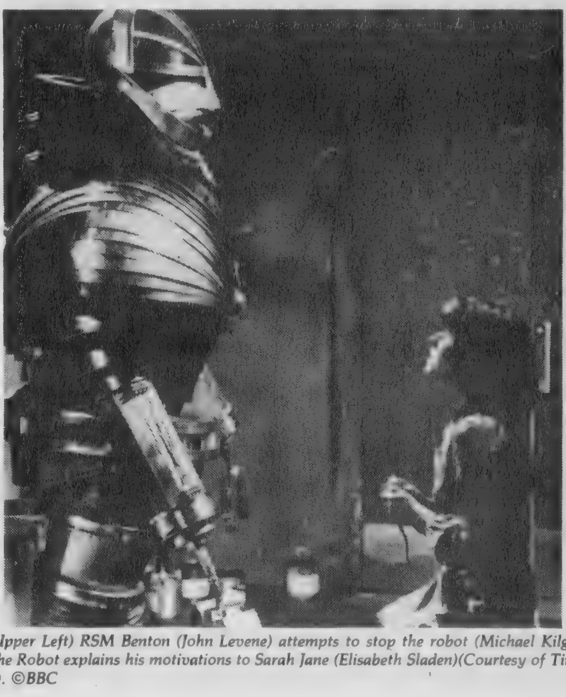
Harry calls the Brigadier from Thinktank, which is being evacuated to a place called "the Bunker". Harry is captured and taken along, where Miss Winters activates the automated defenses. Using access codes, she holds the world to ransom by the threat of thermonuclear devastation. Whilst the robot, armed with the disintegrator, holds off the raiding UNIT troops, Kettlewell starts the computer takeover of the missiles. Harry and Sarah escape, and try to talk sense to the robot. It doesn't work, but the robot accidentally kills Kettlewell. UNIT enters the bunker and arrests Miss Winters and Jellicoe, whilst the Doctor stops the computers.

Unfortunately, all is not over. The robot has decided to continue with Kettlewell's plans and captures Sarah. It tries to set off the missiles again, but this time the failsafes are activated. The Brigadier tries to use the captured disintegrator on the robot, but the power just makes it grow to an immense size. It goes on a killing rampage, but the Doctor and Harry manage to hit it with a bucketful of Kettlewell's metal virus, making it collapse and disintegrate.

Back at UNIT, the Doctor talks Sarah into a trip with him in the Tardis. When Harry pops in, he is inveigled into a look inside the Tardis, and is whisked off with them also....

*****

Tom Baker was in fine form in his first story, with his large eyes rolling, his teeth flashing and his wonderful one liners —for example, "Yes, of course I'll talk to him—I'll talk to anyone!" or "There's no point in being grown up if you can't be childish sometimes". In many ways, the story was lucky to have his electric personality as it was by no means a classic tale. The story was hardly original and more in the lines of an *Avengers* episode (which Terrance Dicks had also



"Robot" (Upper Left) RSM Benton (John Levene) attempts to stop the robot (Michael Kilgarriff). (Above) The Robot explains his motivations to Sarah Jane (Elisabeth Sladen)(Courtesy of Time Life Television). ©BBC

contributed to) than a *Doctor Who* story. Disintegrator guns and killer robots were hardly staggering stuff, but the first story of a new Doctor usually needs room for the lead actor to try out his role to its best, and it certainly did that for Baker.

Effects were very poor in the visual sense, with very obvious overlays and poor CSO. The robot, however, was staggeringly crafted and very neat. Unfortunately, it hardly looked capable of mining and moved awfully slowly to be a real menace. Operated by regular heavy Michael Kilgarriff, it managed to have a very good screen presence all of the problems notwithstanding. The believability of the monsters has always been a strong point for the show and the robot was no exception, until the unfortunate growth sequence and King Kong rampage. The Oedipus complex it develops is very well handled, though.

The Doctor's alien nature was again stressed at the start, by mentioning his two hearts and abnormal (by human standards) bodily responses. The regeneration sequence was recapped from the ending of "Planet Of The Spiders", with Pertwee's face fading into that of Baker, who was wearing Pertwee's old costume. He selected a new one after much experimentation—a sequence cut from the Time-Life episode for no really obvious reason.

4C) The Ark In Space

By Robert Holmes (4 episodes) From an idea by John Lucarotti (January 25th—February 15th, 1975)

CAST

The Voices	Gladys Spencer Peter Tuddenham
Vira	Wendy Williams
Noah	Kenton Moore
Libri	Christopher Masters
Lycett	John Gregg
Rogin	Richardson Morgan
Wirrn	Stuart Fell Nick Hobbs

CREW

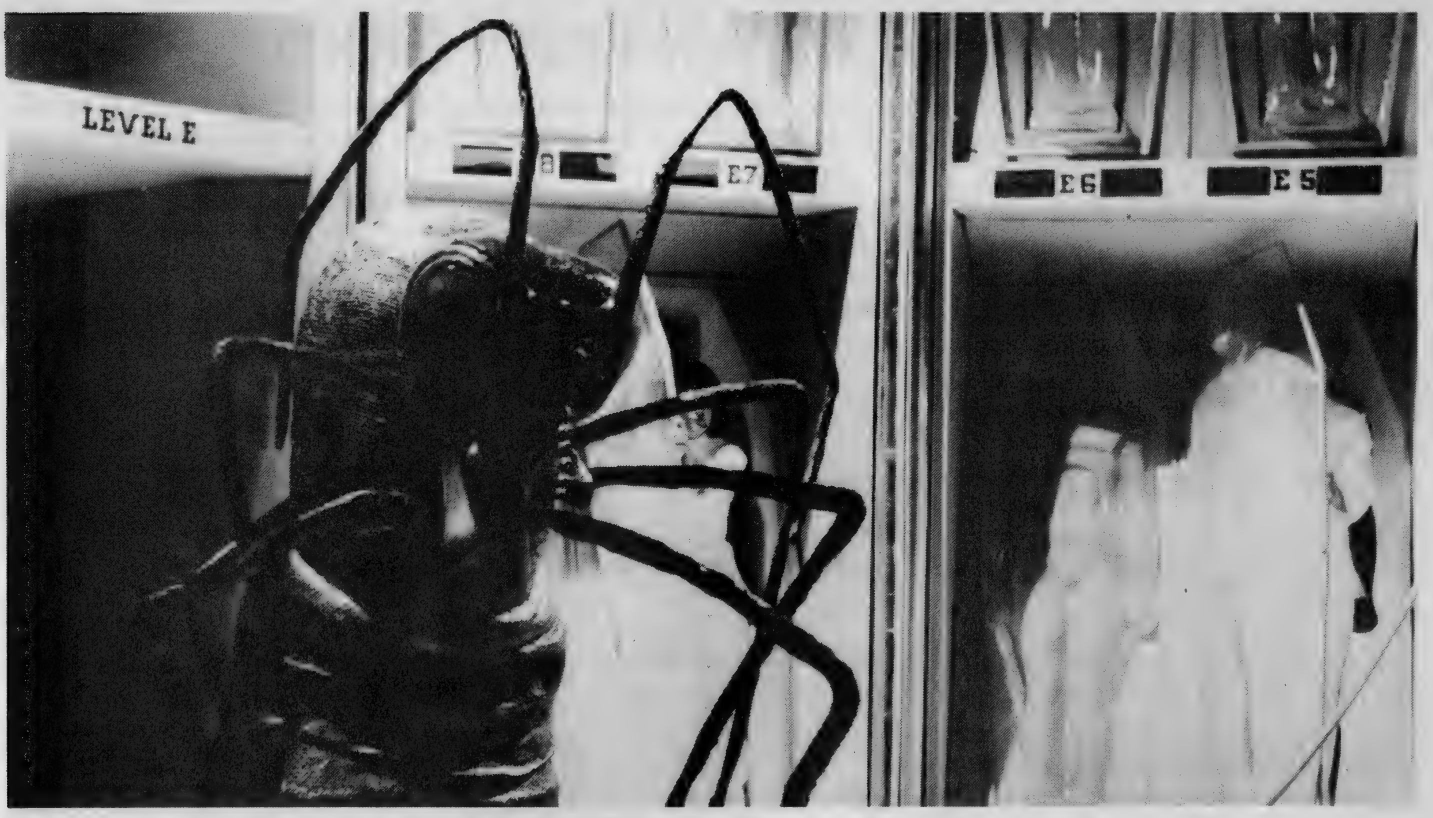
Production Assistant	Marion McDougal
Visual Effects	John Friedlander Tony Oxley
Designer	Roger Murray-Leach
Lighting	Tommy Thomas
Makeup	Sylvia Jones
Costume	Barbara Kidd
Sound	Vic Goodrich
Director	Rodney Bennett

Instead of a simple trip to the Moon, to show Harry what the Tardis can do, the ship lands on space Station Nerva, tens of thousands of years in the future. Harry's itchy fingers touched the Helmic Regulator and sent them off course. The life support systems have been deliberately severed, so the Doctor has to reconnect them to enable the three travelers to continue breathing. This unfortunately also reactivates the defense system, which has him and Harry pinned under a table whilst Sarah is transported away via a Transmat beam. She is put into deep sleep and added to the frozen crew in the life room. The Doctor and Harry manage to outwit the defenses, turn them off and start to look for Sarah.

In their search they find a trail of green slime—something odd is at large on the ship, like a giant slug. Eventually they discover the library and the cryogenic chamber, with its thousands of sleeping humans. They discover another slime trail here and also Sarah in suspended animation. Harry, searching, stumbles across a dead Wirrn, a huge, space-going insect, which, luckily for him, is quite dead.

One unit has started to revive automatically—that containing Vira, a Medtech. She in turn revives Noah, the captain and her husband. She tells Harry and the Doctor of the great solar flares that made the Earth uninhabitable. The station is the remnant of humanity that did not emigrate to the stars. They have somewhat overslept... There is a fault in the solar stack, which the Doctor investigates, to discover that something huge and slimey is feeding on the power and regenerating. Also, Vira discovers a technician is missing—with a slime trail leading from the booth. Refusing to allow the Doctor to disconnect the solar stacks, Noah investigates them and is attacked by a Wirrn larva. Questioned later as Libri is revived, Noah is strangely split between his human responses and the mind of an adult Wirrn....

The Doctor realises that the Wirrn is using the frozen humans as food and absorbing their knowledge with the eating. Noah is mutating into a Wirrn, but cannot warn the others too specifically. Whilst the crew are slowly



"Ark In Space" The Wirrn feed upon the frozen forms of the human refugees of space station Nerva.... ©BBC

awakened, the Doctor plans on destroying the Wirrn when they enter their pupal stage, so he and Harry carry out an autopsy on the dead Wirrn. If they can discover what killed that, then they have a weapon. The answer is that it was electricity. The grubs are breeding now and attacking the revived humans in order to stop their inevitable counter-attack. The humans are trapped in the cryogenic center. In order to escape, Rogin and Harry are transported via the intraship Transmat beams.

The Doctor discovers hundreds of cocoons in the power stacks, and meets Noah, who is now mutated completely into an adult Wirrn. Noah tells him that the humans had discovered and destroyed the Wirrn in the Andromeda Galaxy and that the Wirrn now want Earth as a breeding ground—and as food... The Doctor needs power to electrify the superstructure of the station to destroy the Wirrn and the only place left is the small transport ship. In order to run a cable from it to the cryogenic center, Sarah has to take a hazardous trip through the conduit system. Once the power is turned on, however, and everything electrified, the Wirrn attack the transport ship. Using the rockets, they are driven off. The Doctor tries to appeal to Noah to lead the swarm off into space and find a new home, but instead, he uses space as a fresh approach to the rocket.

The Doctor tells Harry and the station crew to set the transport for automatic take-off and to abandon ship. When this is done, the Wirrn enter the craft and Rogin launches the ship, dying in the backblast. All of the Wirrn swarm is aboard the ship, which is heading into space. Noah calls the station and tells them it is finished—and destroys the ship, killing the rest of the swarm. At the end, his human half won through.

All is settling down now, but there is a small problem with the Transmat to Earth. The Doctor and his two friends agree to beam down to the Earth to check on the trouble, whilst Vira and her friends will awaken the rest of the survivors..

****

This was a classic *Doctor Who* horror story, with its roots firmly in the old *Quatermass* serials from the 1950s. In his earlier script "Spearhead From Space" (1970), Robert Holmes had nodded at *Quatermass II*, with its factory taken over by aliens arriving in meteor showers; *Quatermass And The Pit* had influenced "The Daemons" (1971); and for this story, it was the turn of *The Quatermass Experiment*. In that, we had been treated to a human mutating slowly into an alien creature, and the best of the scenes, where the astronaut pulls out his mutated arm and stares at it in silent agony, is repeated in "The Ark In Space."

This film was to have been filmed second in the season, but problems led to the filming of "The Sontaran Experiment" first, using the same technical crew. The extra delay helped get matters straight on the sets of "The Ark In Space", which had to be reusable for the final story of the season.

For the second time in the season (and not the last), there was a very strong female lead in the story. In fact, with the exception of "Revenge Of The Cybermen", every story in the first Tom Baker season had a very strong female character in the lead, either as villain or hero. (In the case of "The Sontaran Experiment", it was Sarah, admittedly, but she had a very much larger and better role than normal.) Evidently women's lib was extending very much into *Doctor Who*!

Continued Next Issue

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FANTASY EMPIRE'S JEAN AIREY TALKS WITH THE COLORFUL NEW DOCTOR WHO

MIAMI Marriott
ON BISCAYNE BAY

MIAMI Marriott

He has an irrepressible zest for life, this tall, blonde Englishman. His wit is sharp and incisive but loving, and as likely to be turned on himself as on anyone else. He is Colin Baker, the Sixth Doctor on *Doctor Who*. It's his first convention in America and he sits back, at ease, in the warm February sun in Miami.

His very first role was playing a girl in a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. With infectious humor he comments that his reviewers felt that he brought great zest to the part, while never straying more than an octave from the notes. He trained as a lawyer for five years, then decided that he really wanted to become an actor and entered the London Academy of Music and Art. When he left the Academy, he toured in a production of *Pliniff Is A Pretty Hat* and a play at the Mermaid theatre. He has appeared extensively in repertory theatres in England and Scotland as well as a season at the noted Chichester Festival. His recent theatrical roles included *The Flip Side*, *Underground*, *Odd Man In* and *Doctor In The House*. His television appearances include *Roads To Freedom*, *Within These Walls*, *War and Peace*, *The Brothers*, *Blake's 7*, *Citadel* and *Doctor Who*. Fans of *Doctor Who* first saw him in "Arc of Infinity" where he was —most unkind—to the Doctor. But he doesn't feel that that character was a 'villain'.

"I would hardly put it in that light. Maxil was the security commander on Gallifrey just doing his job as commanded by the Time Lords and they were trying to protect Gallifrey from the evil of the bonding of the Doctor and Omega. So they had to destroy the Doctor. It's quite logical and all Maxil did was do as he was told."

Playing a villain would not have been a new experience for him, however. A program he did earlier in England was *The Brothers* which ran for many years. In it he played a sort of J.R. type of character. "I was J.R. before J.R. was. In England I was the man you loved to hate which made me the most unpopular person, but at the same time I was the most popular.

"It was a series that was on in

England from 1967 til '76. Half way through the program I came into it. It was about a haulage company—truck driving—which was run by three brothers. And the three brothers all had their own problems. It was a bit like the *Dallas* set up only it was set in London and they didn't sit by the pool freezing to death pretending it was hot. Half way through the series the company had to expand so they had to borrow money from the bank and the bank put in this chairman of the company, this young guy who was called Paul Marriney and he was the whiz kid banker. He was totally ruthless, totally unscrupulous but totally honest, unlike J.R. He never did anything anyone could send him up for but he just ruined people's lives. He was a very interesting character and he made my name what it was in England so much so that when the program ended in '76, I was out in the cold a bit. I couldn't do any television for about five years. I did stage work. That's the nice thing in England, there's a very vital theatre network and they're very anxious to get people they've seen on television out into the theatres. So you can earn a very good living working in the theatre. But I missed television so it's been quite nice to get back in again. It did rather typecast me. I've always got villain parts until now. They always cast me as the heartless, stone-blooded type." He smiles.

Immediately after *The Brothers* he went on to play Bayben The Berserker in a *Blake's 7* episode. Bayben was a total meglomaniac and the casting could easily be labeled as typecasting. But Colin was able to recognize and deal with a problem that has traditionally been an actor's nightmare.

"I enjoyed it while it happened. I went to Israel and I was told that the Arabs would have stood a better chance if they had actually attacked—during the Six Day War—on the night that *The Brothers* was on. I was at a party and I had a phone call from Moshe Dyan who said how very upset he was at not being invited and how very much he enjoyed the program. It had that kind of impact and it was the same in Sweden as well. Sweden has a great love of English theatre, so I've been asked to do plays over there which I've directed and co-produced. When I finish these current episodes of *Doctor Who* I shall be going over to Sweden to direct *The Mousetrap* by Agatha Christie, appear in it four or five weeks before I start back in on the new series."

But being typecast did have its disadvantages. "Being typecast is annoying because it somehow diminishes you as an actor. Before I got the part of Paul Marriney I was playing all sorts of parts. Suddenly... and it's not the public, the public will accept you... producers and directors only cast me in those parts. Even though it's work and it's enjoyable for that, it doesn't stretch you. But they are the more interesting parts to play because it means at the end of the day of really being horrible to everyone you can go home and be actually quite nice, because it's all out of your system. I always find the guys that play the good guys are the ones with the problems because they're so *good* all day long.

"I've enjoyed playing the disreputable characters but the wonderful thing about the Doctor is that he's a bit of both, he's heroic in the sense that the greatest heroes have, not flaws so much as qualities which would not necessarily seem to go hand in hand with heroism. Pure, unadulterated heroism is awfully boring, those goody goody heroes. For instance, the thing about Superman is that they've got such a large tongue in their cheeks with these new movies that it's fun and they highlight his goody goodiness and make it into a parody of itself and that's why it works so well. But if it were done at the lowest 'Hey, I'm really good, folks', it doesn't give you much of a place to go. Whereas the Doctor's got his eccentricities to hamper him in his flights across the universe which takes the edge off his purity.

"Doctor Who is neither a good guy nor a bad guy. He's an apart guy. He has a very strict code, he's always on the side of goodness in the universe but you couldn't always say he was being saintly. He's very rude to people and apparently quite heartless, although he's not really. I feel at the moment—which is just having done two

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ON BISCAYNE BAY

episodes, I have quite a long contract ahead of me—I feel that I could do it for eternity because I enjoy it. It's a novelty and it's fun. I know it's going to be very hard work because I spoke to Peter and I've already seen the pressure we're under. For instance, less than 12-14 hours from now I'll be in rehearsal, after a nine hour flight, so that's going to be a bit hairy. But I think I have one advantage that perhaps none of the previous Doctors have had, and that is that I have always been a sci-fi fan. Which means that there's more to it than just doing a job, it's something extra. So I think I'll enjoy doing it as long as it's there."

He has a keen appreciation of the relationship between special effects and characterization. "Obviously in a Science Fiction show you have to have some special effects. I think special effects should serve the show rather than the show be a showcase for the special effects. Particularly in a show like *Doctor Who.* When you're making a big movie like *Star Wars* the special effects play a much larger part and quite rightly too. With a program like *Doctor Who* it's the story and the characters and the interplay of the characters that develop the story that matters most. Obviously if someone points a piece of twisted plastic at you, you can't just say 'Bang, you're dead'. It's got to look as if something's happening, so they do put on the effect electronically rather as an enhancement rather than as the whole. I love special effects. I can sit and watch that *2001* scene where they're running around inside exercising forever. I adore that film, *2001*. It's wonderful. I love all the Star Wars stuff. I love *Battlestar: Galactica*. You never talk about that, that's a domestic product of yours and yet I've seen very little of *Battlestar Galactica* at this con. I want that dog, the Daggit. Send me the Daggit."

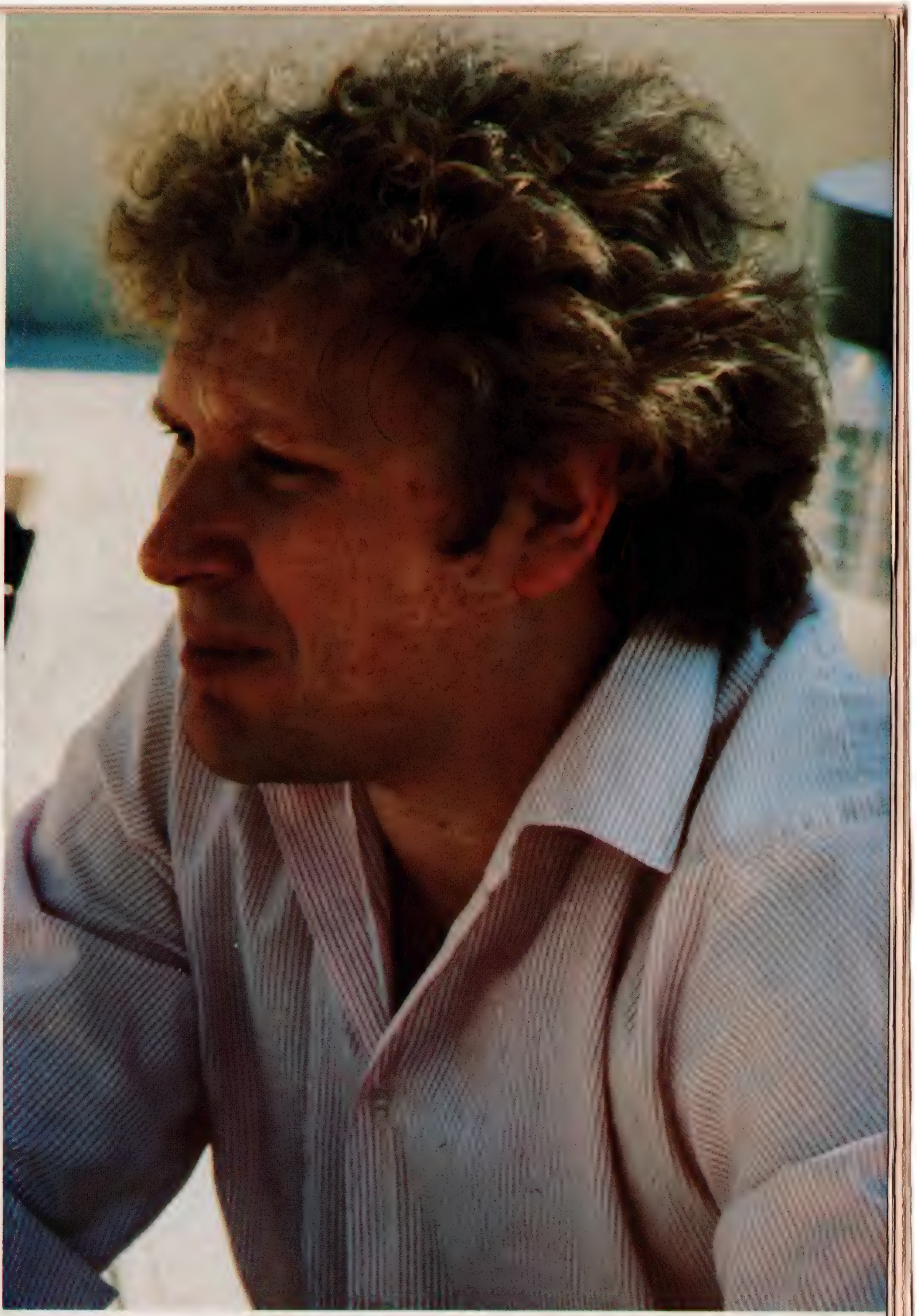
He doesn't believe that his interest in Science Fiction will have an effect on how he plays the role, though. "Nothing outside of the program would influence me in the playing of the role. Doctor Who is a paragon apart really from all of the others. I don't mean that in any arrogant way but it really has set up its own ethos, if you like. The previous five Doctors, I've absorbed most of. I've watched all the programs and I've watched them again just before I started and sat for hours and hours and absorbed what they were doing. But I think in order to play the Doctor you have to draw on yourself very largely. I think the reason John Nathan-Turner asked me to play the part is he saw things in me which he thought I could bring usefully to the part."

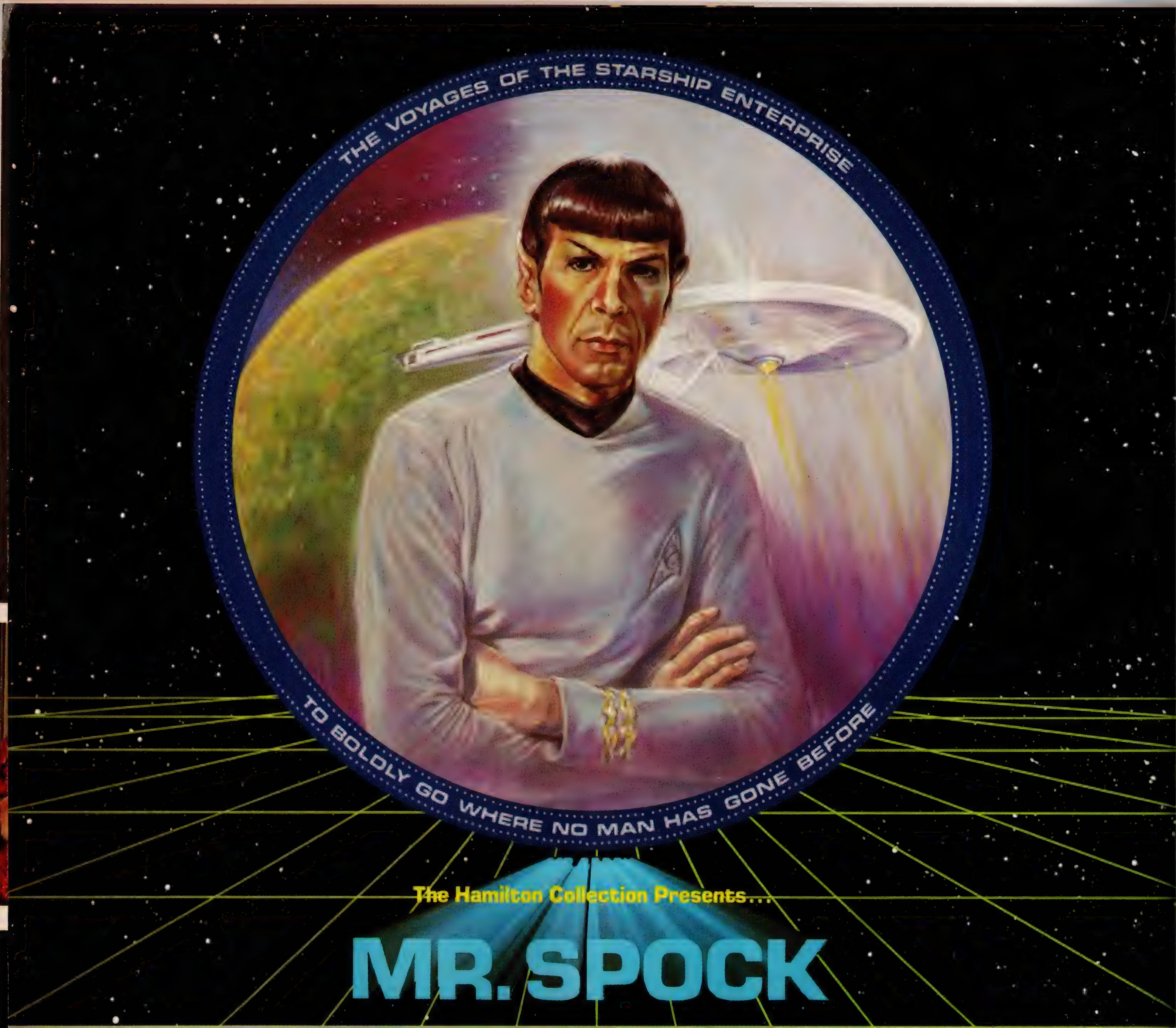
He hesitates only for a moment when asked to elaborate. "That's hard to say really… great charm, personal beauty…". The cautious interviewer might well have noticed the lurking smile before this. Having hooked a fish, he laughs delightedly and continues. "Cats, a sense of the ridiculous, a sense of chivalry. I believe in a lot of the great values of chivalry and sort of a cross of the Dragonriders of Pern and William Tell. Given the choice of physical or non-physical, I think my Doctor… I hope… will be cerebral. I certainly want him to be the brightest there is around, while it's going on."

But with an emphasis on the mind, will this Doctor be a 'physical' Doctor as well? "When John spoke to me he said how do you feel about the physical stuff and I said I love doing it. I did stage fighting with Shakespeare and all that. There's not a lot of swordplay in *Doctor Who.* I think it might be nice between the Master and the Doctor. I'd like to get involved in one of those. I love the physical stuff and I want to climb the walls and fight the villains."

Just how did he get the part? John Nathan-Turner says that he had watched Colin keep a group of actors and actresses spellbound for an afternoon and felt that if he could do that for professionals, his appeal should be strong for a television audience. How does Colin see his selection?

"The extraordinary thing is when it was suggested Tom was finishing on the program, I rang up my agent and said, 'Look, I want to do that program, get onto it.' And before he could do anything Peter was announced. I was really annoyed, I didn't think I had much chance but I thought it would be nice to have a go. And this time it happened the other way around, I didn't even know Peter was leaving when

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John got in touch with me."

As he relates the story, he thought that John was calling him to ask him to do a publicity appearance for the program, to "open a fete or something, and I had all my excuses ready. But that wasn't it at all." After being asked he went home and watched "hours of tapes" and wound up accepting the role. "But I had to be hidden for a long time, you see. In fact John and I were having a sneaky drink at a pub when Peter came in one day quite by chance and we had to make up stories. He knew he was going but John didn't want anyone knowing who was taking over until the right moment. So I had to pretend I was there for another purpose. 'I come to clean the windows'," he says in a heavily accented voice. "It's tough as an actor." The blue eyes are very innocent, but you can see that he enjoyed every minute of it.

Will this new Doctor *be* Colin Baker, or will he be what the scripts allow? "It's a sort of marriage, if you like. Your own personality plus the page in front of you that says what the Doctor says and what he does, all somehow gradually combining over a period of time into something different. There would be no point in my trying to imitate any of the other Doctors, nor would I want to any more than they would have wanted to either. I think they've always gone for a Doctor who is different from the one who has gone before. Because Peter was very different from Tom and I'm very different from Peter. I should be perhaps a little sharper than some of the previous ones. I'd like the Doctor to go along the lines of being really intolerant of stupidity and very arrogant, extremely arrogant. Like Sherlock Holmes without his addiction to drugs and the Stradivarius. But his extreme sarcasm and intolerance of slower minds might be similar to one of the features of mine." he adds mysteriously.

"I think the external eye of the producer is the one that's the one you really ought to question there because he's the one who has to see the balance. I do have to say that John Nathan-Turner is unique. He really is one-of-a-kind. The producer in a television program is the one who sets the whole thing up. He hires the director, hires all the crew and the actors and then stands aside and lets them get on with it and usually tends to be a shadowy figure that you don't have much contact with. They very, very rarely take any active interest in promoting their programs. John is a phenomenon. He has lifted up *Doctor Who* by the scruff of the neck. It was doing quite well before, but he's brought it alive and kicking into 1984 and he's not going to look back. It's 95% his efforts alone. I shall never be able to express my gratitude to him for the chance he's given me and the atmosphere in which he lets the work go because it's very relaxed. We have a really good time doing it. We laugh a lot and we joke a lot. There has to be control sometimes, but...". He grins.

He does not anticipate great changes in his personal life. "I'm lucky because I live way out in the country, miles from anywhere in a small village community. Yes, there is a small amount of

excitement because the Doctor is living in their village but they're people I know and they'll get over that, so my domestic life probably isn't going to change much at all." He was not aware that during the years when Tom Baker was the Doctor, he never smoked in public because of the possibility of being seen by children. "That's a strong spirit. I gave up smoking about 15 months ago so I don't have to worry about that. I certainly do believe that Tom was quite right that whoever plays the Doctor does have a responsibility never to have any children ever have the remotest worry about what they see you do. So I have no intention of breaking the senses of England as I amble through the streets. I think you do have to be very responsible, you're going into so many homes. To go into someone's home like that is a privilege. To be welcomed as the Doctor as in this program is an even greater privilege." He continues on passionately, the subject is obviously one that he has considered before.

"I can't get over the fact that there are some actors who say 'Oh, look, this is a real drag, all these people wanting autographs.' Well, do something else then. Go be a bus driver. If you want to be an actor you want people to see your work, the more people see your work, the better you're doing your job. The other side of that is people are going to want you to sign bits of paper for them. If it makes people happy, why the hell not. It's lovely. What other job do you get where people come up to you and say 'I really like what you do.'? The majority of the people around the world never get any feedback on the work they do. They go and they do it 9 to 5. They go home and nobody says you're doing well. It's wonderful, isn't it?"

He agrees that attention is something people need for ego gratification. "I also love being the center of attention. It's real nice, it suits me." He says laughing.

Commenting on the question of the show, now in its 21st year, being tailored to meet a changing audience, he says: "Again I'm speaking as a newcomer, any changes would be gradual and imperceptible rather than deliberate. I don't think there comes a point where they say 'Hey, hang on, there's a different audience, you've got to angle it this way, angle it that way.' Everyone develops along with the program. It's like a marriage. You don't suddenly change a habit. You see what the other person likes and gradually you sort of work together. It's the same with actors and audiences and television companies and audiences. We don't have the restrictions that the independent companies have in that they do always have to consider the advertisers and the potential viewing figures. The BBC is free of that because it's a public channel so it does allow people to let their artist rein go free a bit. I think the main trouble with continuing a series like *Doctor Who* is finding the writers. You can set standards but if you lose your good writers you have to find other good ones."

Like most actors, he remembers with great fondness some of the funny moments of his career and, on being asked, delights in recounting them. "I did *War and Peace* with Anthony Hopkins. I played Prince Anatol who is the bad guy who elopes with Natasha and is the brother of Elana. And there is a scene where I am discovered eloping and I'm pursued. The extras were supposed to chase me across this cobbled courtyard. The courtyard was in the studio and the cobbles were made of rubber. The extras had been told 'Chase him across the cobbles, through this courtyard door and start shouting'. I ran across the cobbles and one of them had bent up, so I tripped over it and my sole got caught in the trousers and I did sort of a double flip and landed on my back and the extras ran over me. They didn't stop. They didn't realize that 'Oh dear, we must stop this take because it is finished.' No, they all stomped me into the ground. It wasn't funny at the time." He says ruefully.

"During *The Brothers* we had lots of boardroom scenes where all the directors and myself as chairman sat around this table. I was quite lucky because before I was an actor I was a lawyer which meant I have a certain amount of business knowledge, so I could understand some of the garbage we'd have to say. But there was one lady in particular who, bless her, wasn't in the front of the line when brains were being dished out. She couldn't quite grasp some of the dialogue and we were so hopeless with mirth and falling out of our chairs with her struggling with some of the words. And the directors used to come scream until they were blue in their faces, but we were all just lying there helpless.

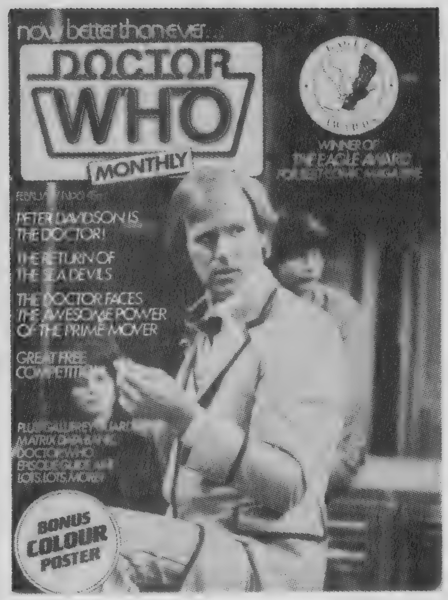
"The best thing that always happens is when a set falls down or a bit of scenery comes off in your hand. Those things are wonderful. They happen on stage more than on television. I was doing a Restoration play. We were all in those very elegant, fine clothes. It was a scene where we were having an argument. The argument finished, and I had to leave the stage and the people who were left had to talk about me. Only I didn't get to leave the stage. This other actor went to leave the stage and the door handle came off in his hand. He knew he had to leave because we couldn't carry on the scene with him there so he had two alternatives, go out through the audience or out the window. So he opened the window and crawled out through it, which looked stupid and was even more stupid because it was supposed to be the top of the building. These tree tops are being knocked around as this guy sort of crawls out through the back. The audience could see it and they loved it as well."

Even though planning on staying with *Doctor Who* for a long time, he can still speculate about other roles. He looks forward to his continuing career in acting, apart from *Doctor Who*, realistically. "There are some parts I am physically unsuited for playing. I do have a deep love for things like Conan. If I looked like Conan I'd love to get that sword in my hand and start hacking. I love all that. I rather liked those costumes last night that were in the contest. I think that most of my reading at the moment is more into the fantasy area of Science Fiction than it is in Science Fiction." He names Anne McCaffrey and Michael Moorcock as two of his current favorites. "I love those books, they're wonderful. Science Fiction is about the future and the Moorcock books are about a past that never did exist but might have done and I love all that stuff." He'd be willing, he insists, to play Ophelia in *Hamlet*, but *not* Godot in *Waiting for Godot*. Those knowledgeable about that particular play joined in the joke, while others wrote the comment down in all seriousness.

He has enjoyed attending his first American convention very much. "The only thing that's spoiled it a bit is that in 14 hours I have to be in rehearsal which means I haven't been able to allow myself to run riot as I would have liked to have done and to attend more of the functions and the films and things. We had a strike at the BBC. We should have finished the first four episodes and we weren't able to which means I have to get back tomorrow and rehearse a day or two for the next day's filming and I haven't learnt the lines yet. I have the script upstairs in my room. I keep thinking I must sit down and learn them and I haven't."

A member of the convention staff comes to collect him. He's due to talk to the last panel session and then do an autograph signing session and then go directly to the plane for the flight back to England. It's been a hard-paced weekend, but he doesn't show it. He waves goodbye to the interviewers and heads off to the panel. We heard later that the filming on Monday went *very* well. With Colin Baker as the Doctor, we would not have expected anything else!

DOCTOR WHO THE MARVEL WAY


now better than ever...
DOCTOR WHO
MONTHLY
WINNER OF THE EAGLE AWARD
PETER DAVISON IS THE DOCTOR!
THE RETURN OF THE SEA DEVILS
THE DOCTOR FACES THE AWESOME POWER OF THE PRIME MOVER
GREAT FREE COMPETITION
BONUS COLOUR POSTER

The Sea Devils on the attack.

By John Peel

For my third script intended for Marvel's *Doctor Who Monthly,* I decided to try a tale about one of my favorite monsters from the television series, the Sea Devils.

Created by the late Malcolm Hulke in 1972 for the Jon Pertwee series, they had always impressed me. For Jon Pertwee's first season in 1970, Malcolm Hulke had been commissioned to write a story featuring cave monsters, and had created the Silurians (see *Fantasy Empire Summer Special* for details), and they had proved to be extremely popular. When the Royal Navy offered the *Doctor Who* production office the use of some of their facilities for a story, Terrance Dicks and Barry Letts, the script-editor and producer, asked Malcolm to write a sort of sequel to his earlier story, only to make it aquatic. So instead of lizard-like beings who had survived through the ages, and who wanted their planet back from a bunch of jumped-up hairless apes, he created the Sea Devils, who were turtle-like beings instead. But they still wanted their planet back. The Master (played by the late Roger Delgado) stepped in to complicate matters in his desire for revenge on the human race, but eventually, of course, the Doctor and his human allies win out.

What had always fascinated me most about both the Silurians and the Sea Devils was that they were not, as such, an evil or nasty race. To their minds, at least, they had a legitimate complaint —they had prior claim to this world by several million years, and it wasn't really all that surprising that they wanted it back, after having waited in suspended animation for so long. (They saw a rogue world heading for the Earth and expected it to devastate the planet, so retreated to undersea and underground shelters; the world was the Moon and went into orbit. The shelters malfunctioned and the creatures never thawed out until we disturbed their sleep.) And there were not simply a lot of meglomaniacs in charge of the race, but thoughtful, intelligent beings who would agree to compromise if such could prove possible. They had many scientists, but also a few hot-heads, and this led to the confrontations with the humans. In Malcolm Hulke's stories, the humans behave far more badly than the "aliens" do, and what happens is laid definitely at the door of the human race.

Given this background, I wanted to bring back a reasonable, friendly race of Sea Devils for the strip, following in their creator's footsteps as closely as possible. It wasn't practicable in four pages to bring back the entire race, so I settled for one scientist, eager to study the changes that evolution had caused over the millenia. As with Malcolm Hulke's stories, it is the humans who are the villains again, this time in the form of pirates. Since my "trade mark" for all of my stories for the *Monthly* was the use of historical settings for my science fiction stories, it seemed appropriate to use the buccaneers of the Spanish Main as the villains. The lead character amongst them was Korvo, which is Esperanto for "raven". (One of my wife's interests is Esperanto, so I simply couldn't resist using it.)

It's always interesting to see how an artist draws a strip that you've written, because as you write, you have a picture in your mind's eye of how the result will turn out. Naturally, the artist, when he reads your script, has a picture in *his* mind's eye of what your words suggest, and they are always a different picture. This time around, the artist was John Stokes; his renditions of the script were so beautiful that I asked for him to do my fourth story also, and luckily he was able to....

*****

My thanks for the permission to reprint this strip go to Marvel Comics Limited, and especially to Tim Hampsom, who was so helpful. The story is reprinted from *Doctor Who Monthly #61* (February, 1982). ©Marvel Comics Limited, 1982.

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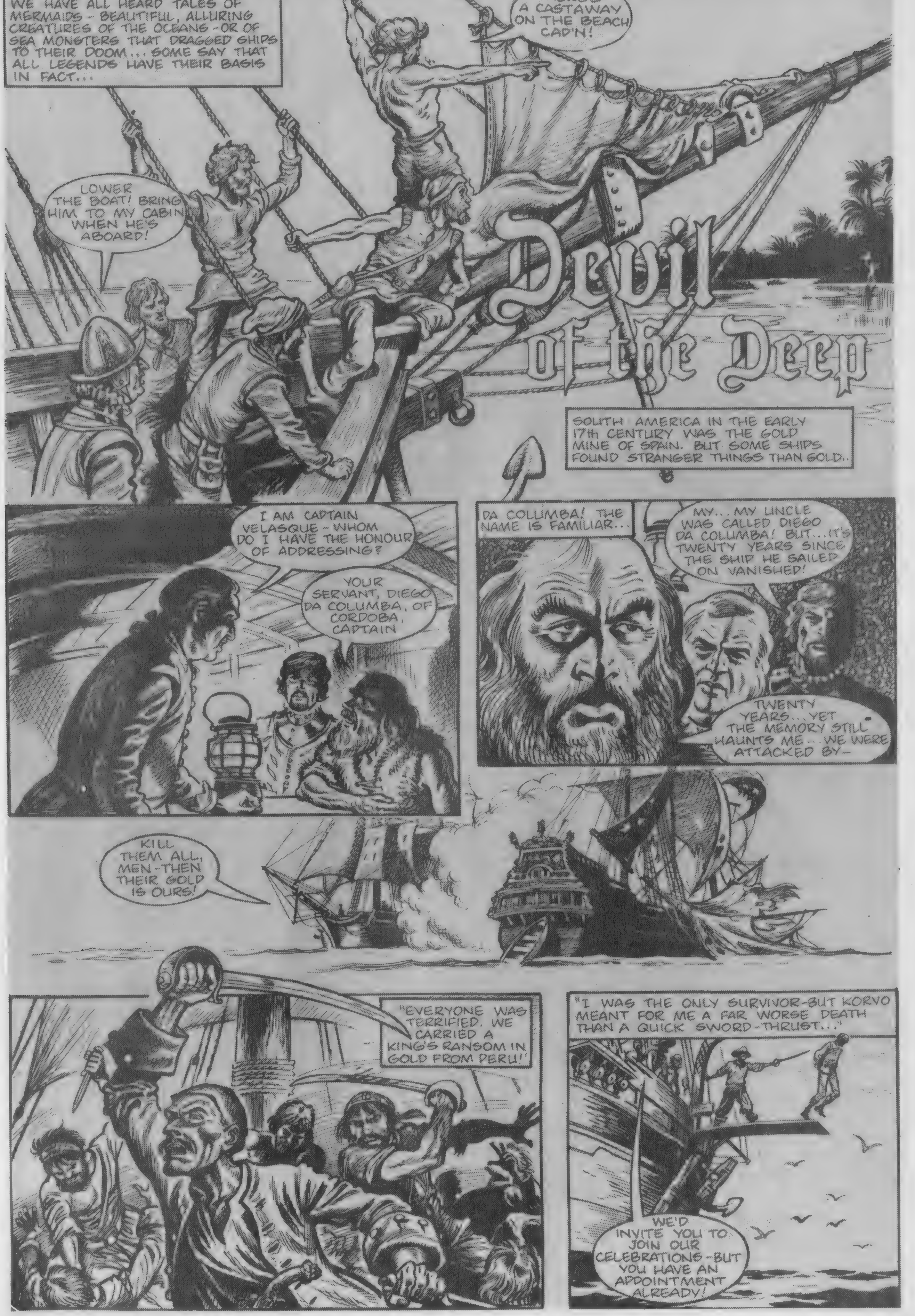
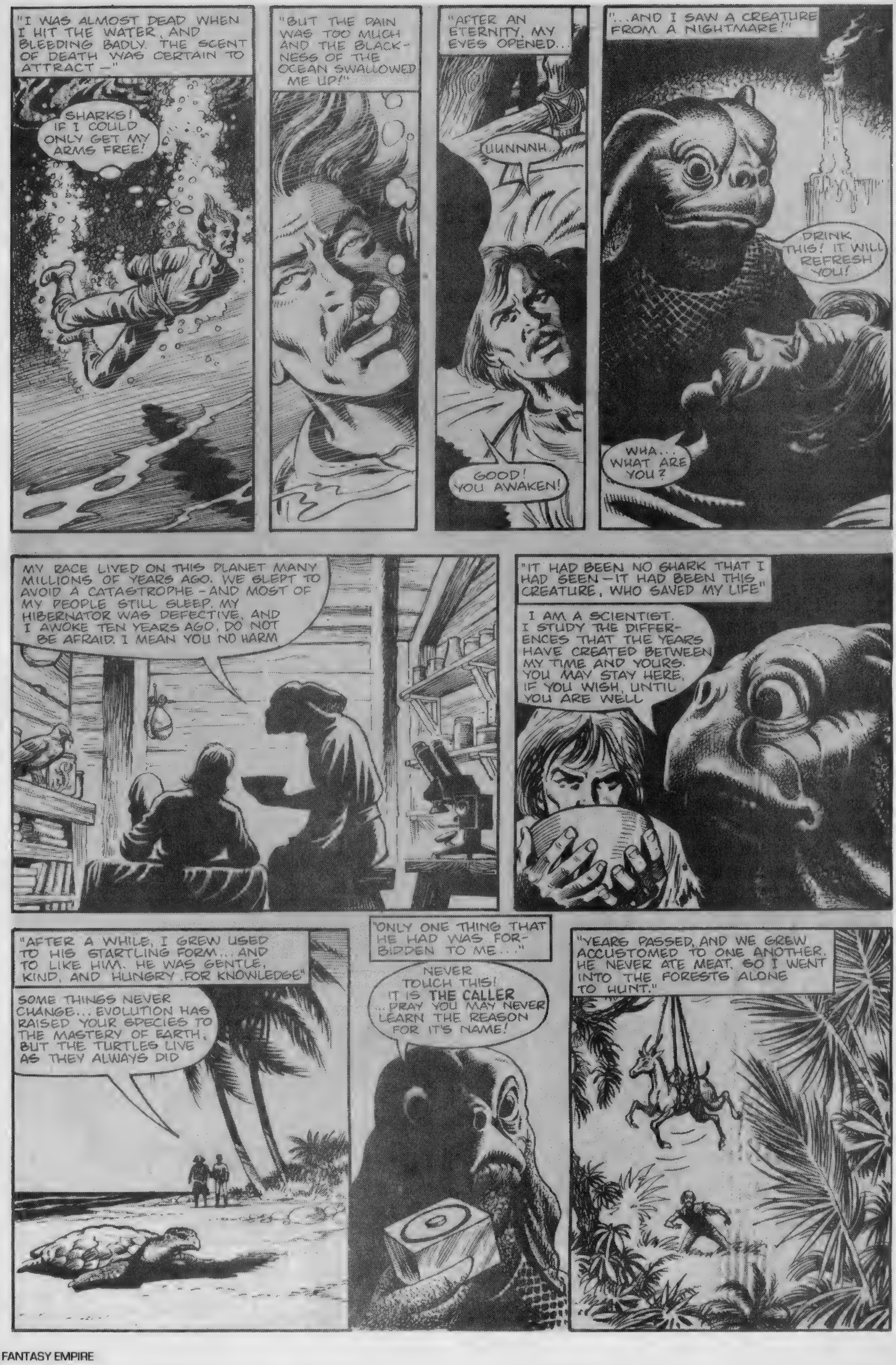
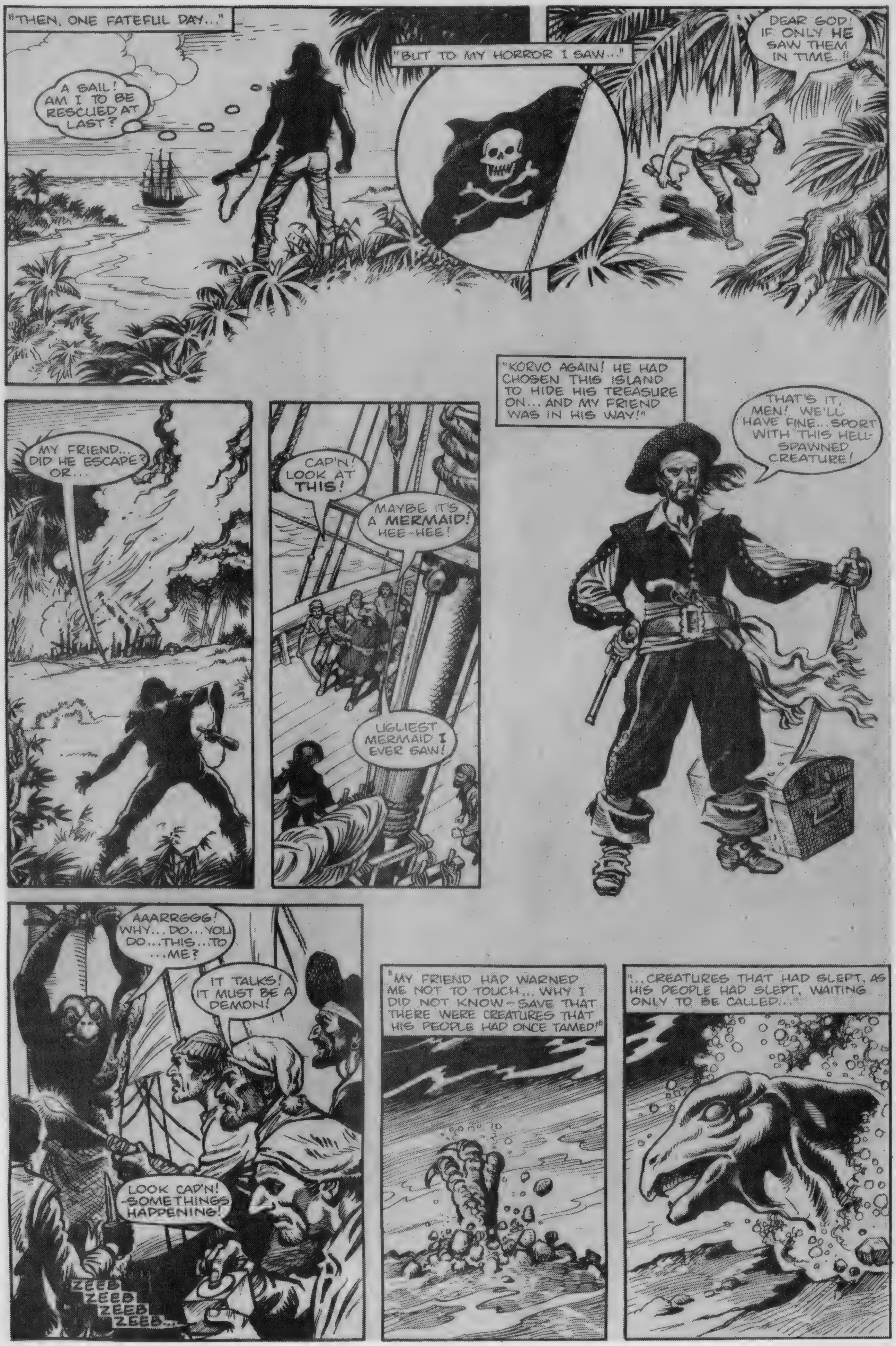
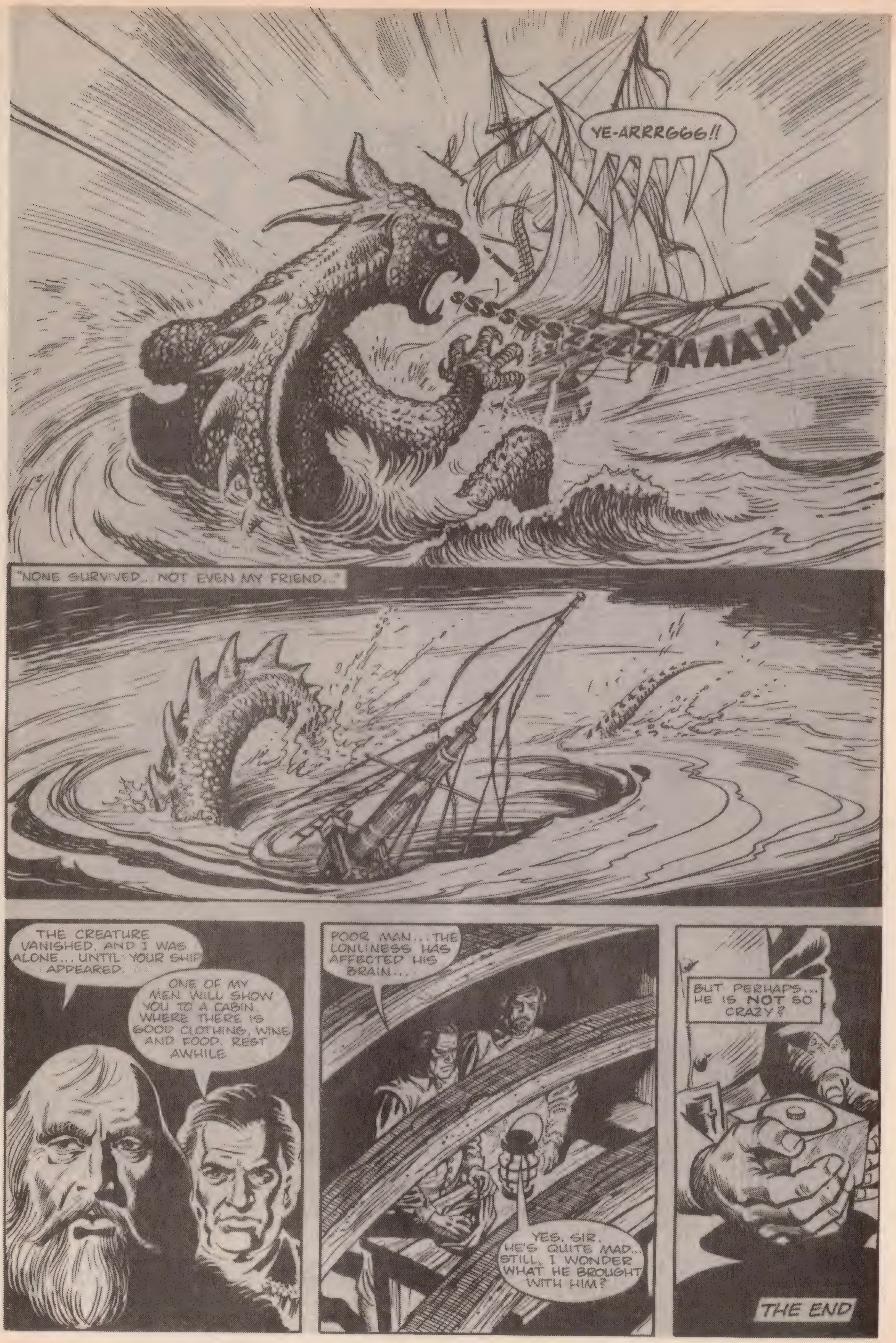
Devil of the Deep


WE HAVE ALL HEARD TALES OF MERMAIDS - BEAUTIFUL, ALLURING CREATURES OF THE OCEANS - OR OF SEA MONSTERS THAT DRAGGED SHIPS TO THEIR DOOM... SOME SAY THAT ALL LEGENDS HAVE THEIR BASIS IN FACT...
THERE'S A CASTAWAY ON THE BEACH CAP'N!
LOWER THE BOAT! BRING HIM TO MY CABIN WHEN HE'S ABOARD!
Devil of the Deep
SOUTH AMERICA IN THE EARLY 17th CENTURY WAS THE GOLD MINE OF SPAIN. BUT SOME SHIPS FOUND STRANGER THINGS THAN GOLD..
I AM CAPTAIN VELASQUE - WHOM DO I HAVE THE HONOUR OF ADDRESSING?
YOUR SERVANT, DIEGO DA COLUMBA, OF CORDOBA, CAPTAIN
DA COLUMBA! THE NAME IS FAMILIAR...
MY... MY UNCLE WAS CALLED DIEGO DA COLUMBA! BUT... IT'S TWENTY YEARS SINCE THE SHIP HE SAILED ON VANISHED!
TWENTY YEARS... YET THE MEMORY STILL HAUNTS ME... WE WERE ATTACKED BY-
KILL THEM ALL, MEN - THEN THEIR GOLD IS OURS!
"EVERYONE WAS TERRIFIED. WE CARRIED A KING'S RANSOM IN GOLD FROM PERU!"
"I WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR - BUT KORVO MEANT FOR ME A FAR WORSE DEATH THAN A QUICK SWORD-THRUST..."
WE'D INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR CELEBRATIONS - BUT YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT ALREADY!

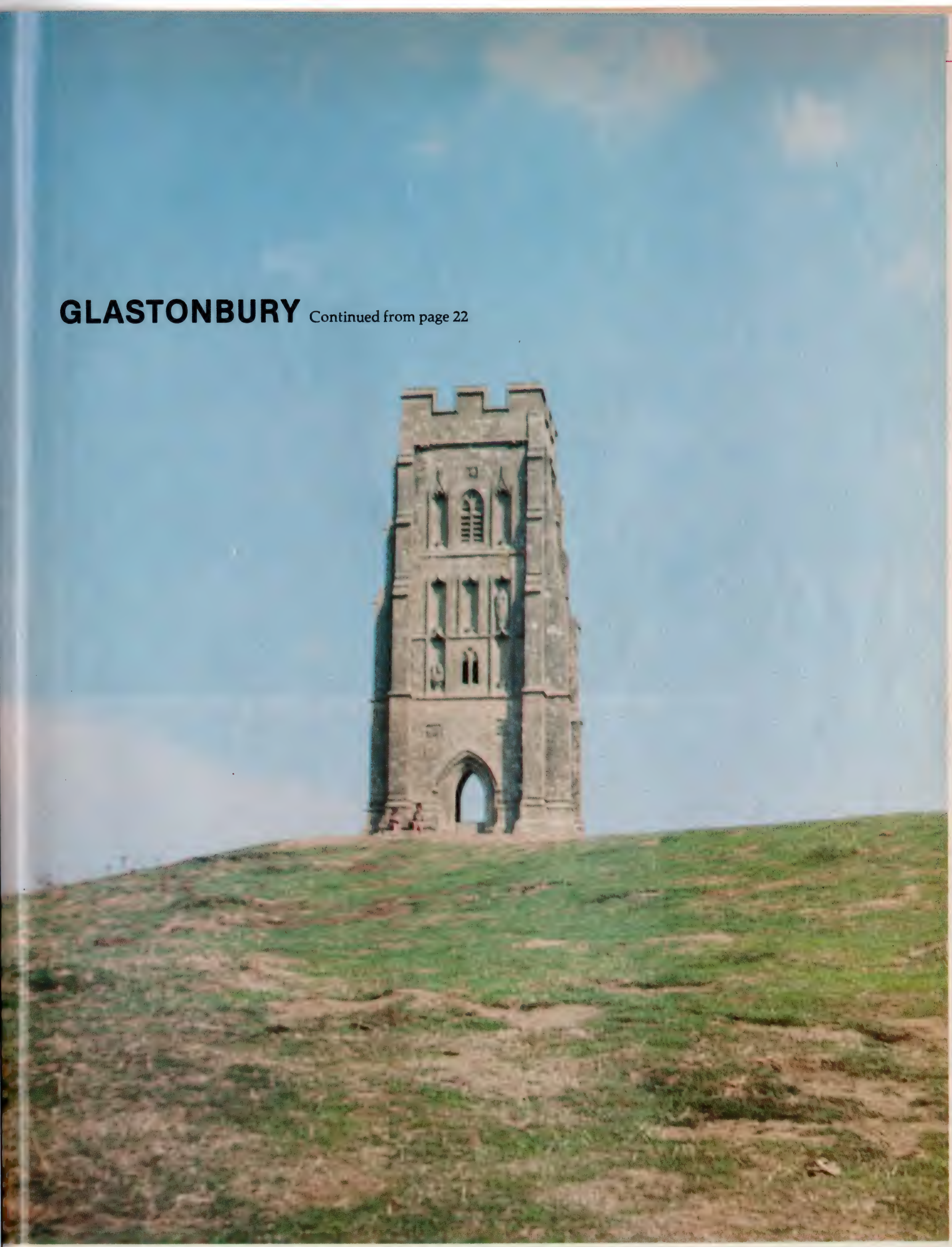

"I WAS ALMOST DEAD WHEN I HIT THE WATER, AND BLEEDING BADLY. THE SCENT OF DEATH WAS CERTAIN TO ATTRACT —"
SHARKS! IF I COULD ONLY GET MY ARMS FREE!
"BUT THE PAIN WAS TOO MUCH AND THE BLACKNESS OF THE OCEAN SWALLOWED ME UP!"
"AFTER AN ETERNITY, MY EYES OPENED...
UUNNNH..
GOOD! YOU AWAKEN!
"...AND I SAW A CREATURE FROM A NIGHTMARE!"
DRINK THIS! IT WILL REFRESH YOU!
WHA... WHAT ARE YOU?
MY RACE LIVED ON THIS PLANET MANY MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO. WE SLEPT TO AVOID A CATASTROPHE – AND MOST OF MY PEOPLE STILL SLEEP. MY HIBERNATOR WAS DEFECTIVE, AND I AWOKE TEN YEARS AGO. DO NOT BE AFRAID. I MEAN YOU NO HARM
"IT HAD BEEN NO SHARK THAT I HAD SEEN – IT HAD BEEN THIS CREATURE, WHO SAVED MY LIFE"
I AM A SCIENTIST. I STUDY THE DIFFERENCES THAT THE YEARS HAVE CREATED BETWEEN MY TIME AND YOURS. YOU MAY STAY HERE, IF YOU WISH, UNTIL YOU ARE WELL
"AFTER A WHILE, I GREW USED TO HIS STARTLING FORM... AND TO LIKE HIM. HE WAS GENTLE, KIND, AND HUNGRY FOR KNOWLEDGE"
SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE... EVOLUTION HAS RAISED YOUR SPECIES TO THE MASTERY OF EARTH, BUT THE TURTLES LIVE AS THEY ALWAYS DID
"ONLY ONE THING THAT HE HAD WAS FORBIDDEN TO ME..."
NEVER TOUCH THIS! IT IS **THE CALLER** ...PRAY YOU MAY NEVER LEARN THE REASON FOR IT'S NAME!
"YEARS PASSED, AND WE GREW ACCUSTOMED TO ONE ANOTHER. HE NEVER ATE MEAT, SO I WENT INTO THE FORESTS ALONE TO HUNT."


"THEN, ONE FATEFUL DAY..."
A SAIL! AM I TO BE RESCUED AT LAST?
"BUT TO MY HORROR I SAW..."
DEAR GOD! IF ONLY HE SAW THEM IN TIME..!!
MY FRIEND... DID HE ESCAPE? OR...
CAP'N! LOOK AT THIS!
MAYBE IT'S A MERMAID! HEE-HEE!
UGLIEST MERMAID I EVER SAW!
"KORVO AGAIN! HE HAD CHOSEN THIS ISLAND TO HIDE HIS TREASURE ON... AND MY FRIEND WAS IN HIS WAY!"
THAT'S IT, MEN! WE'LL HAVE FINE... SPORT WITH THIS HELL-SPAWNED CREATURE!
AAARRGGG! WHY... DO... YOU DO... THIS... TO ...ME?
IT TALKS! IT MUST BE A DEMON!
LOOK CAP'N! -SOMETHINGS HAPPENING!
ZEEB ZEEB ZEEB ZEEB...
"MY FRIEND HAD WARNED ME NOT TO TOUCH... WHY I DID NOT KNOW - SAVE THAT THERE WERE CREATURES THAT HIS PEOPLE HAD ONCE TAMED!"
"...CREATURES THAT HAD SLEPT, AS HIS PEOPLE HAD SLEPT, WAITING ONLY TO BE CALLED..."


YE-ARRRGGG!!
SSSSSSSZZZAAAAAHHHH
"NONE SURVIVED... NOT EVEN MY FRIEND..."
THE CREATURE VANISHED, AND I WAS ALONE... UNTIL YOUR SHIP APPEARED.
ONE OF MY MEN WILL SHOW YOU TO A CABIN, WHERE THERE IS GOOD CLOTHING, WINE AND FOOD. REST AWHILE
POOR MAN... THE LONLINESS HAS AFFECTED HIS BRAIN...
YES, SIR. HE'S QUITE MAD... STILL, I WONDER WHAT HE BROUGHT WITH HIM?
BUT PERHAPS... HE IS NOT SO CRAZY?
THE END

GLASTONBURY

Continued from page 22



enlivened the town.

Walking about the grassy banks, one sees many sharp-fanged ruins jutting from the well-tended grass lawns, or bits of arches and vaults. Many rooms have been restored as well as they can be, showing the size and scope of the ancient building programs, and visitors can wander about and stare at the ruins of one of the holiest and most ancient of Christian sites in England.

There was once an extensive graveyard by the Abbey, which has been excavated by both moderns and ancients. In 1191, monks were digging to do building work, and claim to have come across a huge lead coffin, buried between two pyramids. When opened, this was found to contain the bones of a huge, powerfully built man and a small woman. The monks informed King Edward I and told him that they had discovered the bones of King Arthur and Guinivere. Edward, rather a fanatic on the subject, eagerly believed their story and had the historical bones re-interred, with a special headstone. One cannot help but take the story less than whole-heartedly, since the legends of Arthur's death claim that he vanished into the mists to the Isle of Avalon, and such undoubted bones rather destroy the legend. The monks, it should be noted, were rather hard up for cash at the time, and may have indulged in a small fraud to get a little royal patronage from the king, whose court and Order of the Garter were modeled after his own view of Arthurian chivalry.

(Upper Left) The Chalice Well. (Bottom Left) Glastonbury Tor. (Above) Modern Glastonbury

At any rate, the story was accepted fairly widely (Edward may have admired Arthur, but he probably had no desire to encourage pretenders by spreading the story of the great King's one-day-soon return, so finding his bones was probably politically expedient), and the legend went up. Now above the site of the tomb (no longer extant) is a sign reading:

In the year 1191 the bodies of King Arthur and his Queen were said to have been found on the south side of the Lady Chapel. On 19th April, 1278, their remains were removed in the presence of King Edward I and Queen Eleanor to a black marble tomb on this site. This tomb survived until the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539.

So much may be seen by any visitor. It is hard to imagine any of the legends taking place in such a sleepy, pleasant place, but the legends that surround Glastonbury are intriguing and ancient. In prehistoric times, England was in a constant state of invasion and defense, with the natives raising huge hill-forts in the area of Glastonbury, including the famous one at South Cadbury, which may be the true site of Arthur's Camelot. At Glastonbury, however, the solution was different and far more novel—the area was very swampy, so a large marsh-village was constructed about 150 B.C. An artificial island, some four acres in area, was strongly constructed in the middle of the lake, with 89 log huts being built upon it. This meant that something like 500 people were able to live in relative peace there. With their neighboring village of Meare, which was a little larger at 600 people, the town built up quite a trade in metalwork, fabrics and pottery. Perhaps it was at this time that the area became known as the Isle of Avalon, for the wonderful town in the swamps. There was undoubtedly a pagan place of worship not far from where the Abbey was later to stand and it is not hard to imagine the legends beginning to take form around such a nucleus. The village was thoroughly destroyed, however, in the first century A.D., shortly before the first Christian church was built, following the Roman invasion.

With the stories of Joseph of Arimathea coming later to build his church, are tied even odder ones that it was in fact Jesus himself who built the first of the English churches and that Joseph merely restored it. William Blake immortalised some of these ideas in his poem *Jerusalem*: "And did those feet in Ancient Times/Walk upon England's mountains green?/And was the Holy Lamb Of God/In England's pleasant pastures seen?"

At any rate, Joseph supposedly brought the chalice from the Last Supper, now become the Holy Grail, with him to Glastonbury. It was in quest of the Grail that many of Arthur's knights of legend were to set out. The Grail cycle of stories was a late addition to the Arthurian corpus, but proved to be an extremely enduring one. Joseph is supposed to have either buried it at the foot of the Tor or else passed it on to a guardian, depending on which version one wants to follow.

Glastonbury is almost certainly the mythical Island of Avalon and the site of much of the action in the Arthurian legends. Whether the Chalice Well, or the Tor, have any correspondence with any of the sites in the generally known stories is hard to be certain. And who can really say if the bodies found by the monks were really those of Arthur and his Queen or merely a fraud? The bones have long since vanished, the myths have hardened into texts and the ruins are now nothing but ruins. The links now between Glastonbury and the rich pageant of Arthur's Camelot, or the mournful mists of his passing into legend in a boat of maidens, can only be made by the imagination....

Inside the Abbey looking out.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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King Arthur's Avalon by Geoffrey Ashe (William Collins, 1957)

The Cheeseboard

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

The Guest Serenade (L to R) Ian Fraser, Fiona Cumming, John Nathan-Turner and Anthony Ainley

By Jean Airey

The camera was rolling…the mike was live. I was being interviewed as the Chairperson of *Panopticon West 1983*, a Doctor Who Convention being presented by our club, The Prydonian Renegades. The people with the camera and mike were a crew from the Athens (Ohio) PBS television station (WOUB) and they were doing a documentary on the *Doctor Who* fan phenomena. It was just after the masquerade on the second day of the (full) three-day con and I was appropriately tired. The interviewer asked: "Why do you *do* this?"

Urffle. I am not normally at a loss for words, but how could I explain—simply—in terms that a *general* TV audience could understand? The pat answer I'd give on other occasions, to other fans of "I'm crazy" would really not do! The chances were too great that the average TV viewer already assumed that.

I could have explained that I, and the rest of the committee, liked to do things and to see results. We'd wanted to put on the type of *Doctor Who* convention that we'd like to be able to go to. We all prefer conventions that treat the members as intelligent people, that let the members get involved, that cover a wide area of interests even within a specialized interest group and that are presented by fans for fans. This type of convention has been around in fandom for a long time, but we had not seen many *Doctor Who* conventions of this type. We wanted to do one and then see other fan groups continue it. It seemed perfectly logical for all of us to work for over a year to try to do it. However, what seemed logical to us as fans might not to the mundane viewer.

Could I explain that the opportunity to work with the British guests we'd invited was rapidly becoming a total joy?

Our guests were John Nathan-Turner, Producer, Anthony Ainley, The Master, and Fiona Cumming, Director ("Castrovalva", "Snakedance", "Enlightenment"). We'd met John and Tony before—but we'd never worked with them. The working relationship was turning into something very special.

John had given us support, backing and encouragement in the months before the con when it looked as though the commercial outfits were trying to kill off the smaller, non-profit, fan-type of convention. With John's approval, we'd backed our own hunch and pulled back guest 'security'—something of a gamble. But we'd noticed that the British DW guests seemed to really enjoy being able to walk around a convention and talk to the fans and certainly the fans enjoyed

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

Prize winning fan art

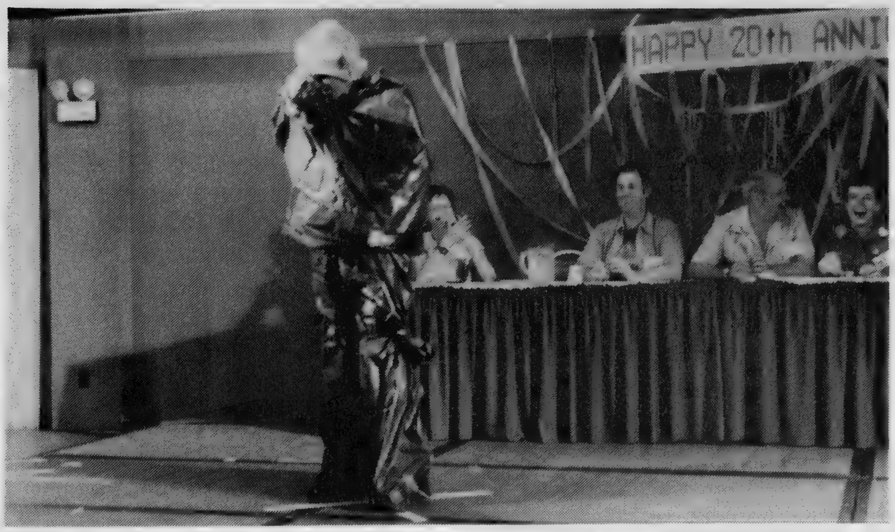

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

"Create a DW Monster" contest. The "Man From Glad". Panel (L to R) Bobbie Pallone, David Saunders (DWAS), Ian Fraser and Fiona Cumming

that! We asked our con members not to ask for autographs but to feel free to talk to the guests when they saw them. Now the con was up and running and the 'laid back' security approach was working. The guests were having a great time and so were the fans. It seems that a lot of people's behavior depends on how they're treated.

We'd asked Tony to MC the "Create A Monster Contest". This was a low budget (under $10) masquerade, the first ever attempted at a DW convention. We'd added a 'fan judge' (selected at random from the audience) to the panel of judges and were trying (also for the first time) a popular vote ballot from the whole audience. Tony had entered into the spirit of the event with gusto and the whole contest had gone over very well. It went over so well, in fact, that we'd repeated the 'fan judge' and 'popular vote' during the masquerade—to similar success.

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

The guest serenade (L to R) Ian Fraser, Fiona Cumming, John Nathan-Turner and Anthony Ainley

Fiona Cumming, whom we hadn't met before—inviting her because of the high quality of her work—had turned out to be one of the friendliest, nicest guests any con could ever want. Her involvement with the show actually dated back to the William Hartnell years and she'd worked with every Doctor except Tom Baker (her BBC training had put her in a different area at that time.) The *Blake's* 7 fans were also delighted to find out that she'd directed one of their favorites, "Sarcophagus". An entirely unexpected bonus to the convention was her husband, Ian Fraser. We'd been told only that Ian was an "independent producer". He'd been getting along very well with all of us and really seemed to be enjoying all the silliness. It wasn't until the con was almost over that we found out that he'd been involved with *Monty Python's Flying Circus!* If anything could prepare someone for American fandom....

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

Fiona Cumming and Jean Airey (moderator)

Then there was the spontaneous guest group performance during the masquerade. While we were waiting for the votes to be tabulated, we'd somehow wound up singing Master-type filksongs ("It's a Small World...") and all the people in Master-type costumes started doing jigs on the stage. While this was going on, JNT called me over and told me that he and Tony and Fiona and Ian were going out in the hall for a few minutes and "we'll be back with a surprise."

The quartet came back, took center stage and performed "When You're Smiling"—only instead of the verbs, they used gestures. It was perfect, and crazy, and all of us loved it. They were called back for an encore and the whole audience joined in! Now you *can't* plan for this kind of thing to happen, but when it does it means that you've got a very unique rapport between your guests and your convention members.

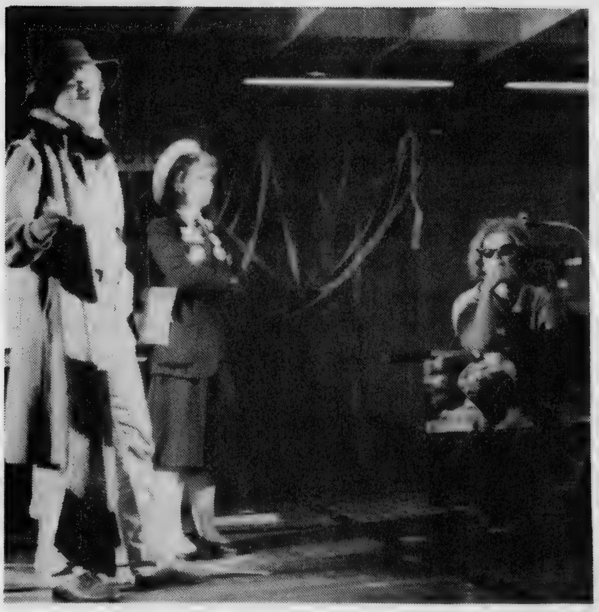

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

Skits—"Doctor Phone Home"

Skits—Who's on First.

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

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Skits—The St. Louis group "takes off" on "The Wizard of Oz"—"Doctor Who and the Jebabs"

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

Skits—Laurie Haldeman and Jackie Paciello —"The Doctor Meets Freud"

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

Skits—The Master threatens to shrink the...munchkins?! "Doctor Who and the Jebabs"

Could I explain that at this kind of convention we were able to see other fans presenting fannish skits with the outrageously silly premises only fans would dream up? We'd seen a DW spinoff from ET, saw the 4th Doctor meet Freud (guess who goes crazy!), a Doctor Who Roast, a puppet play in which the Monster of the Week meets a certain Hawiian-shirted Producer in a direct steal of "Who's on First" (well, when you're involved in the Five Doctors' Special it gets rather difficult!) and, best of all, a group of fans from St. Louis presented a singing, dancing take-off on the *Wizard of Oz*, with K-9 instead of Toto and gigantic "Jellybabies" instead of Munchkins.

Could I explain that to see all the work pulling together, to realize that guests and fans were having a really good time gives me the kind of feeling that completely justifies any amount of unpaid work? Would a mundane viewing audience be able to understand that the opportunity to work with a group of fans as sincere, dedicated and creative as the *Panopticon West* planning committee was payment in its own kind.

After a second "urrfle", I started talking and came up with this explanation of "why do you do it?"

When you become a part of fandom, it's like joining a family. A convention like this was like a family reunion. Our group was hosting the 'reunion' and of course we wanted to do everything we could to see that everyone had a good time. We wanted to be sure that the people coming from out-of-town had a nice place to stay. We wanted to be sure that there were going to be things happening that would make the 'reunion' a good experience for everyone. And when you see your 'family' members having a good time, then *all* the work is worth it.

He liked the analogy. I didn't add that, like *any* family, fans don't necessarily all like each other. I also didn't explain that not every convention is the same.

I'm beginning to think that to a large extent what you get out of any convention depends on what the planners expect to get from it. If the convention holders are planning on enhancing their wallets through the con, you're

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

Anthony Ainley auctions fanzines for the con charity—The Jacques Cousteau Society—The fanzine auction raised over $700 for the charity!

Masquerade—Tom Baker Clone Division—Winner Kerry Hurd presents Jellybabies to the judges.

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

likely to find lots of things 'let go'—since they take time and money that you don't *have* to put out to actually hold a convention.

Crazy people that we were, we had a program book that was over 50 pages long, with a color cover by one of the top fan artists around, Connie Faddis, and interior articles and art by other 'best of the fans'—Gail Bennett, Stefanie Hawks, Rob St. John, Erika Rauscher, Laurie Haldeman, Mary Bloemker, etc. Doing something like this takes time and energy—but it does give the people who come to the convention something to keep. When we go to a convention we like to come away with something like this so it seemed worthwhile to provide it to the people coming to our convention.

The convention ran straight through from 9:00 A.M. Friday morning to 5:00 P.M. Sunday, thanks to fans who were willing to run it—volunteers called gofers. Long hours? Sure, but most of the attendees were coming to the con from out of town and staying over at the hotel. If you're travelling *to* a con you want to have enough things to do to warrant the time and money you've invested in going. If the budget can afford it, we all like going to conventions in other places. We like to be able to meet and spend time with new and old friends and 'day' cons just don't seem to provide the kind of atmosphere that allows for this.

I've run into some fans who look with disdain on travelling to a con, expecting everything to come to them (and the Chicago fans are either getting spoiled or surfeited that way!). I can normally be very sympathetic toward another person's opinion but in this case I really think that if you *never* go anywhere else to a con you're missing something. Not being able to travel because of finances I can readily sympathize with, but to reject the whole idea totally? Not every convention is the same and it's fun to sample the different styles!

Panopticon West 1983 was a very fannish type of convention. We made money for our charity (The Jacques Cousteau Society) and the con members seemed to be enjoying themselves. We'd put a lot of work and effort into it—simply because we're fans too. Yet the fact that this was 'fannish' did not mean that it was 'unprofessionally' done.

On the other hand, maybe I *should* have just gone ahead and given him the usual response of "We're crazy", because our group is doing the same kind of con this year (1984). It'll be June 15-17 at the Quality Inn in Columbus, OH. Registration is (again) limited. If you're interested in a fannish con where the guests have a good time along with the fans, you might want to try it out. You can find out the latest info on this con *and* let me know what you like about being a fan by writing to me at 1518 East Fowler Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33612. Please enclose a SASE if you want a response!

Photo ©1983 Jean Airey

After closing—Con Committee members lead the audience in a rousing cheer for the guests

Adress all Letters to:
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PLAIN ENGLISH

WHO IN HUMOR

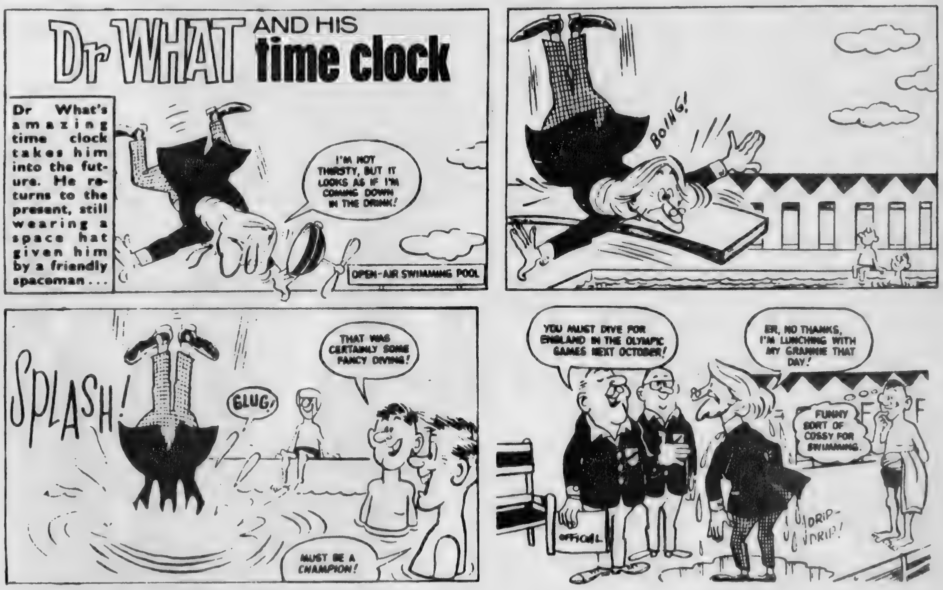
Dear John,

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed strip which, appearing in *Boys World* weekly in June 1964, must be the earliest representation of *Doctor Who* in comic form.

As a long time fan of the Doctor, I must say how much I enjoyed the Fantasy Empire Summer Special, the first copy of the mag I've seen. A splendid read (as we Brits say!). It was a nice surprise to find Dicky's and my strip making a guest appearance on page 12.

Looking forward to many more issues.

Tim Quinn
Leeds, England


Dr WHAT AND HIS time clock
Dr What's amazing time clock takes him into the future. He returns to the present, still wearing a space hat given him by a friendly spaceman . . .
I'M NOT THIRSTY, BUT IT LOOKS AS IF I'M COMING DOWN IN THE DRINK!
OPEN-AIR SWIMMING POOL
BOING!
SPLASH!
GLUG!
THAT WAS CERTAINLY SOME FANCY DIVING!
MUST BE A CHAMPION!
YOU MUST DIVE FOR ENGLAND IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES NEXT OCTOBER!
ER, NO THANKS, I'M LUNCHING WITH MY GRANNIE THAT DAY!
FUNNY SORT OF COSSY FOR SWIMMING.
OFFICIAL
DRIP-DRIP!

MORE BLAKE'S 7

Gentlebeings,

I picked up issue No. 7 of *Fantasy Empire* because it had an article on *Blake's 7*. I made a point of locating No. 8 for the next installment. Nine had nothing, and I hear from a friend who found 10 the other day that *it* has nothing. HELP!!!!

As a relatively recent convert to B7 (a year ago in January) I've been grabbing anything and everything about the show. B. Warne's program guide based on character development is the most original treatment I've seen yet, and makes fascinating reading. But so far you've only covered two seasons, and the show ran four. PLEASE continue the series, even if you have to threaten Warne and Co. with the friendly attention of Servalan and her minions.

Your series may really be a public service—not only is it of interest to regular B7 fans, but it may stir up some of them to try to get the show over here. Who knows (no pun intended), maybe even some of the *Dr. Who* and *Prisoner* readers will get interested in Blake also and swell our ranks.

Please, do try to get coverage on the third and fourth seasons in the program guide. And of course, anything else concerning the show would be most welcome. If you featured B7 regularly I'd even give serious consideration to a subscription.

Thanks

Chris Callahan
Berwyn Heights, MD

Dear Mr. Peel

I have been very interested by the *Blake's 7* articles in your last two issues. Barbara Warne's exhaustive research and intelligent interpretations are accurate and perceptive. The artwork and presentation are excellent and I suspect that the issues will become collector's items amongst *Blake's 7* fans. My thanks to everybody concerned.

Terry Nation

For all Blake's 7 *fans, we will be continuing the season guides, but under a different writer. The problem with running material on the show in* Fantasy Empire *is that there simply aren't enough* Blake's 7 *fans in the USA to make it a popular feature for a newsstand magazine....*

This does not mean, however, that we will not run material on the show. In fact, we will soon be launching a brand-new magazine that will contain Blake's 7 *articles and season guides in every issue. Tentatively called* Fantasy Empire Limited, *it will be available only through specialty shops and subscription. For* Doctor Who *fans, it will contain a complete season guide to this show also, with a fresh start in the early William Hartnell days, tracing its development up to the present. Unlike the series that started in* Fantasy Empire *#2, it will be complete with photographs and episode information. Keep your eyes peeled (sorry about that) for the first advertisements for it....*

FANTASY EMPIRE MAIL ORDER PAGE

(A Little Bit Of British Fantasy For Your Mail Box)

Avengers Written by *Fantasy Empire* contributor Dave Rogers, this book gives complete details of all 161 episodes and includes loads of pictures of the entire cast. "What a terrific book. Colourful, strange, mad and utterly delightful. What a crazy lot we were! Bless you for capturing it all!" Patrick Macnee. ($14.00 softcover)

The Dalek Omnibus Book Contains "Planet Of The Daleks, "The Dalek Invasion Of Earth" and "Day Of The Daleks"—perhaps the most popular Doctor Who episodes of all. ($12.00 hardcover)

Doctor Who '84 Annual Oversized book featuring stories, comic strips, photos and more. An annual event. ($10.00 hardcover, '82 and '83 are also available at $10.00 each)

The Making Of Doctor Who Behind the scenes from the SPFX workshops to the rehearsal studios. ($14.00 hardcover)

A Day With The Producer Of Doctor Who A working day in the life of the producer of Britain's favorite TV show. ($9.00 hardcover)

Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text An analysis of BBC's longest-running fictional programme ever. An intriguing insight into the history of Doctor Who, with a detailed analysis of the cultural and economic forces that have helped to shape the program. Based on interviews with writers, producers and performers in the programme since 1963, the book is packed with practical information, making fascinating reading. It is an essential item in the collection of the true Doctor Who enthusiast. ($17.00 hardcover)

Blake's Seven Guide The complete guide to Terry Nation's most interesting creation including lots of action packed visuals and a close look at the stars of the show. ($15.00 hardcover)

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(NOTE: *Fantasy Empire* mail order page is a continuing feature of the magazine which will present the best and latest in items related to topics of interest to readers. All items have been examined by the staff of the magazine who truly believe them to be of a worthwhile nature. No item will be carried which we do not deem to be of a fun nature or of educational value. All books carried will normally be of hardcover format and where possible games will be boxed sets with attractive packaging. All shipping is always included in the stated price so that you know what you are paying in total for each item.)

All shipping is included in the price of the item. Do not send additional shipping. Please send only checks or money orders and do not send cash through the mails. Allow up to two (2) months for delivery time as many items are produced overseas and stocks can run low at which point we must wait for a reshipping.

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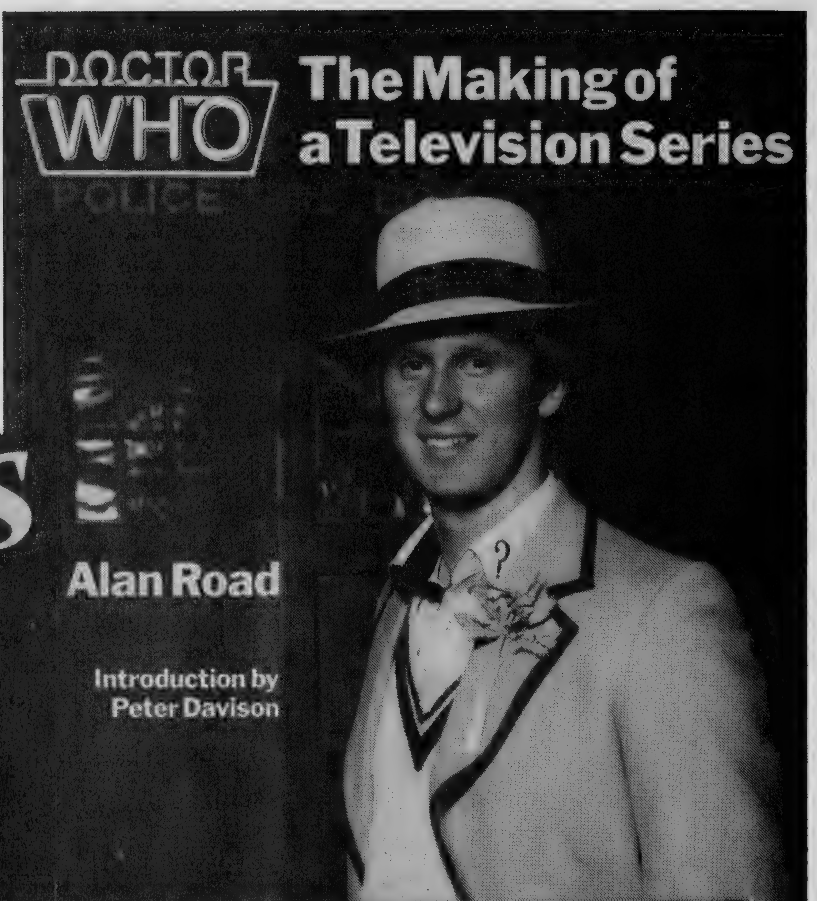

DOCTOR WHO

The Making of a Television Series

Alan Road

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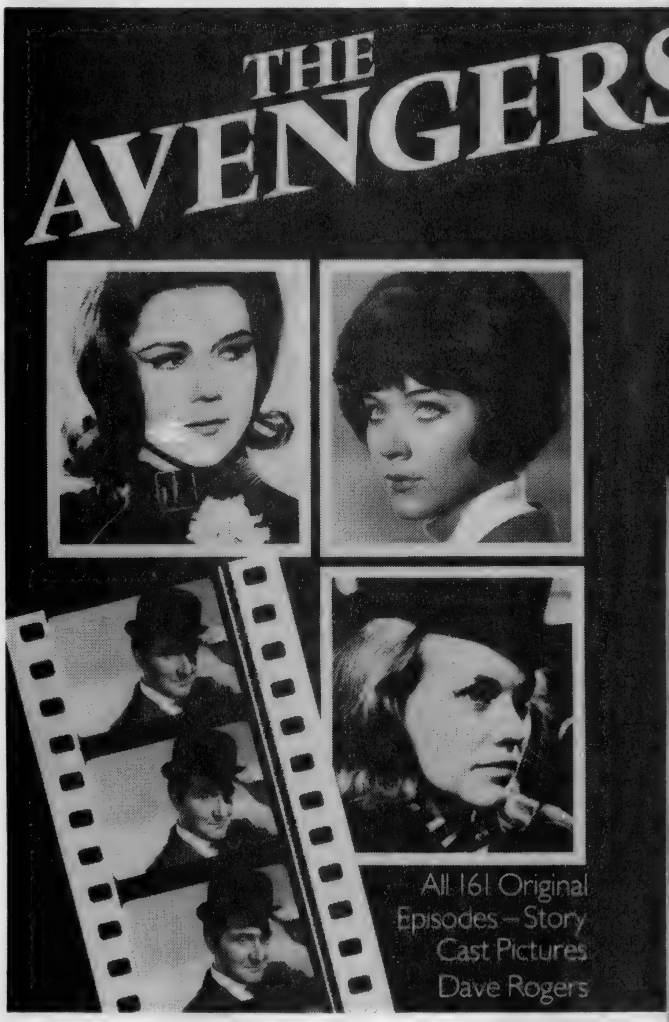

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Dave Rogers

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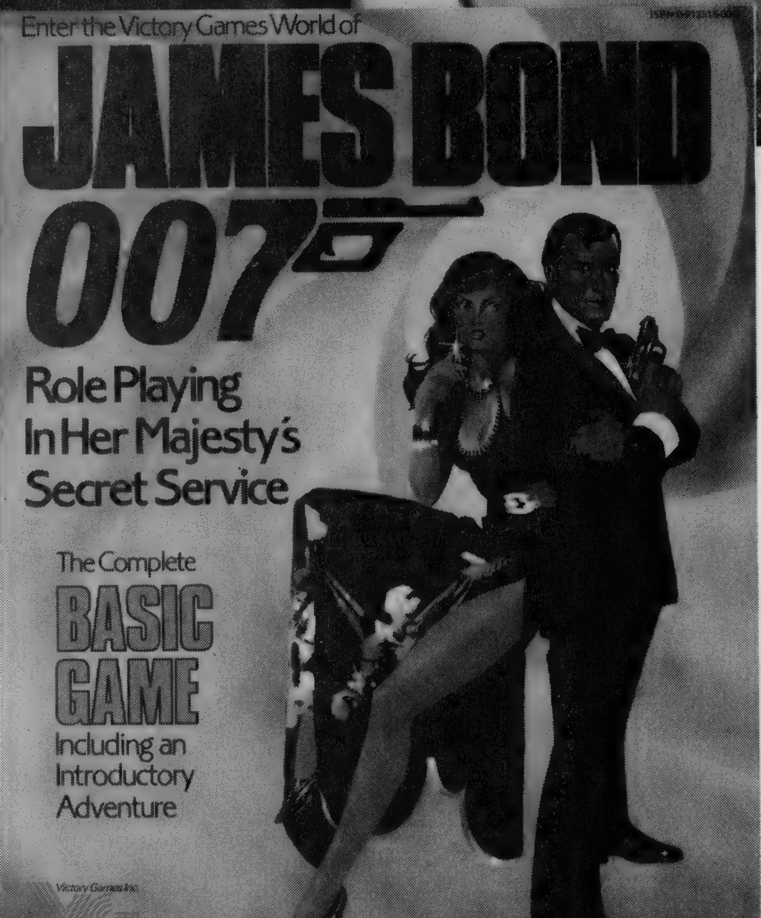

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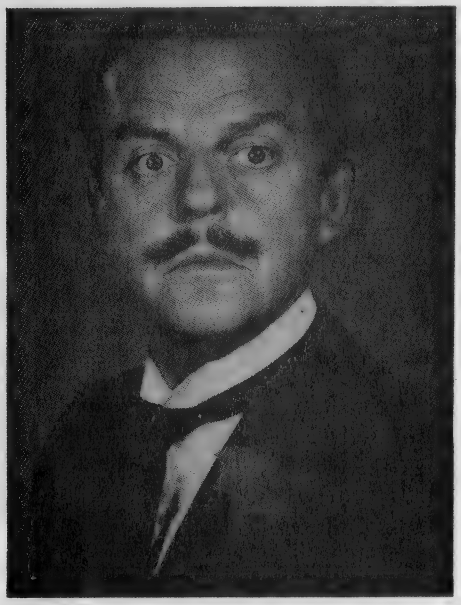
Mary Poppins

Continued from page 8

cup is dashed from his lips, the flame is snuffed aborning/He's brought to rack and ruin in his prime." Bert manages to talk some sense into his depression, and Mr. Banks realises the shallowness of his life. With his change of heart comes a real concern for his children and family, and Mary's job is finished.

Mr. Banks grows with the film, whilst apparently losing his sanity and job. In many ways, both Mary and Bert serve only to bring together the Banks family—working on both children and father to show them all how much they need and really love one another. The film climaxes correctly when this love is shown, and Mary must leave.



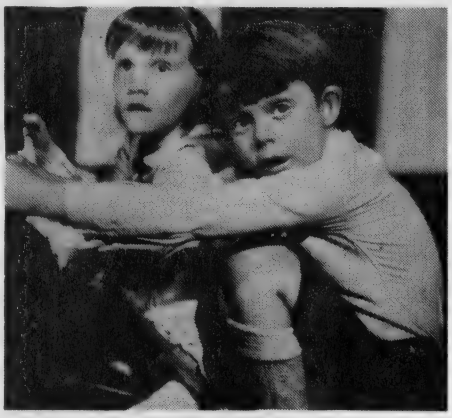
David Tomlinson as Mr. Banks is taught to appreciate his home and children by Mary Poppins. ©Walt Disney Productions

A lesser, but no less crazy, character is Mrs. Banks. Glynis Johns is quite superb as the scatty, changeable mother of the children. She began working in films in her teens, playing naughty schoolgirl roles, moving through pretty lead roles, and finally finding her true ground in her comedy. She had appeared with David Tomlinson in *The Magic Box* (1951), and her first Disney movie was *Rob Roy* (1953). Like Dick Van Dyke, she came into the movie from a successful TV comedy series, *Glynis* (1963). Since then, she has played in many different types of film from comedy to horror (*Vault Of Horror* [1973]) and on Broadway with *A Little Night Music*.

Glynis Johns as Mrs. Banks. ©Walt Disney Prod.

In the books Mrs. Banks hardly has any personality at all, but grew a marvelously silly one for the film. Fired with enthusiasm for the women's suffragette movement, she sings boldly of "Cast off the shackles of yesterday", but meekly obeys her husband and pretends to be very subservient. Still, she manages to twist him about her little finger when the need arises. Mostly, she hates to be bothered with anything in the slightest bit complex, constantly casting off her responsibilities onto others. She has less development in the film, but the implication at the end of the movie is that she is facing up to reality at last.

The children are suitably bratty and lovable, not always an easy task. Both Matthew Garber and Karen Dotrice were discovered by Disney for the film *The Three Lives Of Thomasina* (1964), and moved on to *Mary Poppins* from that. Karen comes from an acting family of some repute in England. Her father is Roy Dotrice, an amiable and eccentric figure in most of his film and TV appearances, best of which was the comedy series *A. P. Herbert's Misleading Cases* with Alastair Sim in the 1960s. Her sister Michelle Dotrice was in Michael Crawford's popular sitcom *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* in the 1970s.



Jane (Karen Dotrice) and Michael (Matthew Garber) combined cute with brattiness. ©Walt Disney

Minor roles in the film are also credibly and cleverly cast. Notable amongst these are Arthur Treacher as the policeman, with a dour, but lovable manner. Treacher was born in England in 1894, and died in 1975. Perhaps even more than his acting, he is known in America for the chain of fish and chip shops he was associated with! After Broadway work, he moved onto films, and managed to get typecast as butlers, though he did do a song and dance routine with Shirley Temple in the unforgivable film version of *The Little Princess* (1939). He was back on the stage, touring with *Camelot* (as Pelinore), when Disney approached him for *Mary Poppins*. In the 1960s, he was a regular on *The Merv Griffin Show*. Ellen the maid (the policeman's girlfriend in the books, but

Arthur Treacher played Constable Jones, but is better known for his chain of Fish & Chips restaurants. ©Walt Disney Prod.

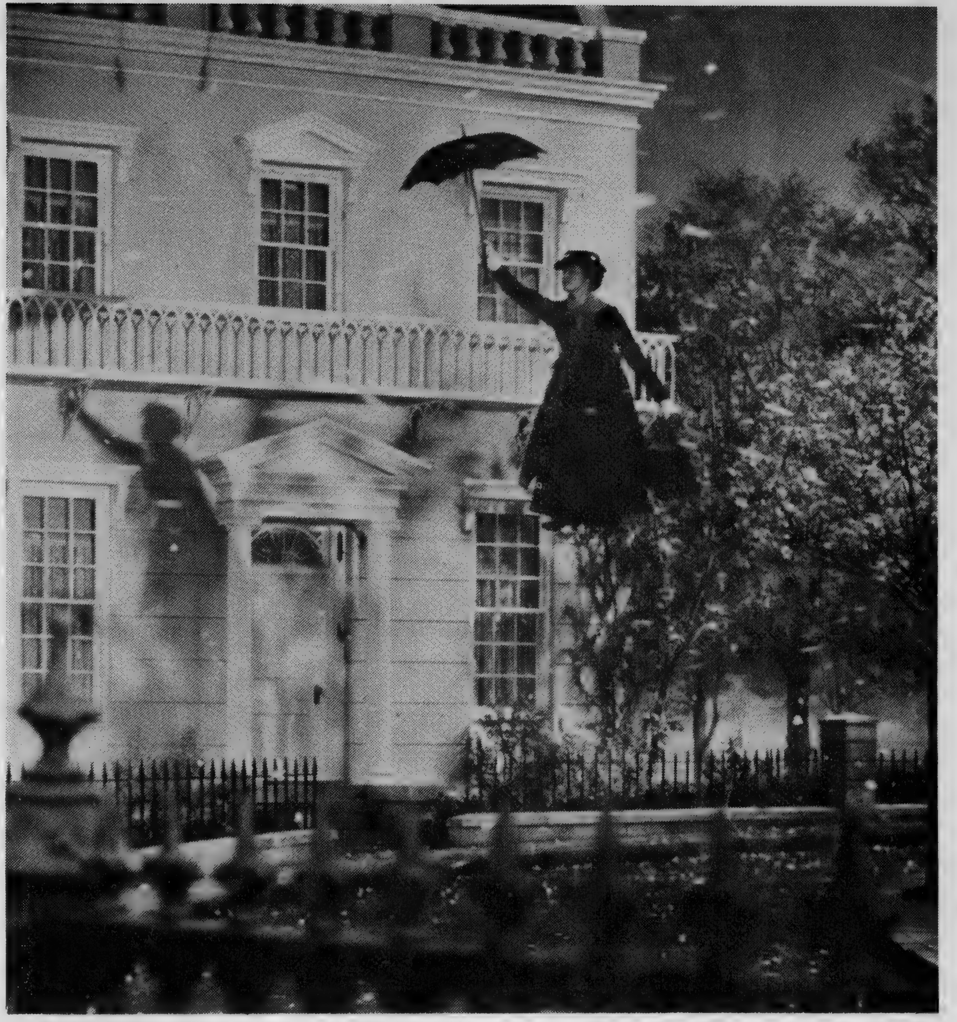
Hermione Baddeley as Ellen. ©Walt Disney Productions

not in the movie) was overacted marvelously by Hermione Baddeley. Another English actress, she is mainly known for her light comedy roles in films like *Passport To Pimlico* (1949), *The Belles Of St. Trinians* (1954) and *Room At The Top* (1959), for which she was nominated for an Oscar. After *Mary Poppins,* she appeared in the TV series *Camp Runamuck* (1965). In the 1970s, she appeared in *The Good Life* (not the English show, but the American) and *Maude.*

Elsa Lanchester has a short sequence as the departing Katie Nanna at the start of the film. The children have run off, and her patience run out. Miss Lanchester is the widow of Charles Laughton, and is best known for roles in such movies as *The Bride Of Frankenstein* (1935), *The Bishop's Wife* (1947) and *Bell, Book And Candle* (1958). Ed Wynn guests as Uncle Albert, who suffers from an overabundance of laughing gas. Ed Wynn (father of Keenan Wynn) died in 1966, but had a long and successful career that spanned from Vaudeville to Disney; in 1959 he was nominated for an Oscar as best supporting actor in *The Diary Of Anne Frank*, and did win the very first Emmy award for best actor in a series in 1949.

Elsa Lanchester as Katie Nanna walked out early in the film. ©Walt Disney Productions

It is of course possible that even a movie gathering such talent together could fail, but this was never even a remote possibility for *Mary Poppins.* From the outset it was quite clear that the Disney studios had a real winner on their hands. Everything meshed beautifully. The movie won five Academy Awards, and deserved every single one of them. From the opening moments, when Mary is seen sitting on a cloud, touching up her make-up (and establishing her own vanity, which is her most serious failing) to the final moments where she once more takes to the air, the film never lets up for a moment. Magic, music and madness abound. The film glories in taking the least-travelled route in all cases. We walk through a chalk picture, dance on the rooftops of London, cause a bank rush, feed the birds, fly a kite, tidy the nursery, slide *up* bannisters... The list is almost endless. Taken all together, the film is the greatest of fun, and deservedly a classic of its kind.



Mary Poppins is blown in to help the Banks household. ©Walt Disney Productions

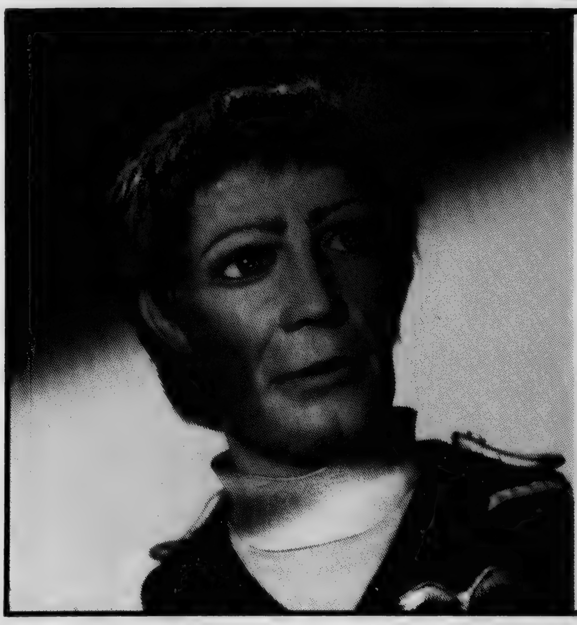
Bert (Dick Van Dyke) in the "Step In Time" number. ©Walt Disney Productions

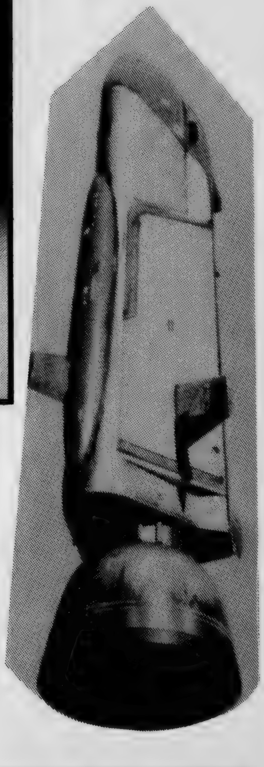
GERRY ANDERSON'S

TERRAHAWKS

Weds Super-Marianation And Japanese Animation

TERRAHAWKS





By John Peel

It has been quite a number of years now since Supermarionation made a fresh appearance on our screens. The process, invented and perfected by Gerry Anderson and his team of workers, first appeared in his *Four Feather Falls,* rapidly followed by *Supercar, Fireball XL5* (for which see the episode guide in issues 9 and 10), *Stingray, Thunderbirds, Captain Scarlet And The Mysterons, Joe 90* and *The Secret Service.* Apart from the first and last, all of these shows appeared on TV screens in America, as well as at home in England. *The Secret Service* was very disappointing, and Anderson moved on to make the equally disappointing *The Protectors* (live action, with Nyree Dawn Porter, Robert Vaughn and Tony Anholt) and the better *UFO*, more like his older works, with models, but no puppets. Finally he made two seasons of *Space 1999*, his most famous, in some ways, though probably his worst series.

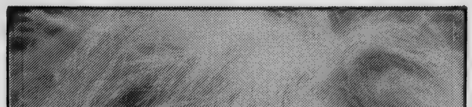
Now, with financial backing from the Japanese (whose influence is evident in the show), Supermarionation has been revived with *Terrahawks,* a new 26 episode series. And it looks as if he has returned to the better style that made him famous.

Basically, *Terrahawks* is an alien invasion series. The first episode, "Expect The Unexpected", opens with an alien attack on the NASA Expedition HQ on Mars, which wipes out the Earthmen. Led by the evil, and extremely ugly, Zelda, the invasion is from the planet Guk, which circles Alpha Centuri. Zelda is an android, who rules over the planet Guk. Driven by a hatred for all living beings, she is dependant on androids and robots for her work of conquest and destruction. From her Martian base, she plans to invade and subdue the human population of Earth. The only organisation that stands between her and the fall of the human race is the Terrahawks.

Terrahawks is based in a secret location in South America. Led by Doctor "Tiger" Ninestein, they fight back and defeat her time after time, with their special craft. The Terrahawk is a hawk-shaped craft which serves as a mobile command HQ for Ninestein. It "nests" on the flight deck of the huge transporter, the Battlehawk, which carries the

All Terrahawks *photos ©ITC,*

TERRA
HAWKS



Battletank in its "stomach". Also in the fleet is the Hawkwing, an atmospheric interceptor, piloted by Kate Kestrel; the Treehawk, an Earth-to-space shuttle and the huge Spacehawk, the first line of defense for the Terrahawks.

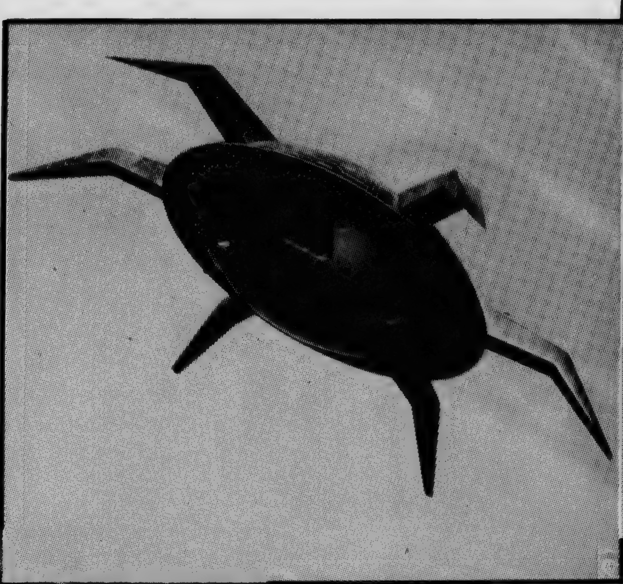
Neinstein is a clone, one of nine made from Professor Gerhard Stein in 1973. The nine grew up, entering different fields of archievement and excelling in all. Ninestein entered the military and was persuaded to mastermind the forming of Terrahawks in 2014 and to command the group from 2018 onwards.

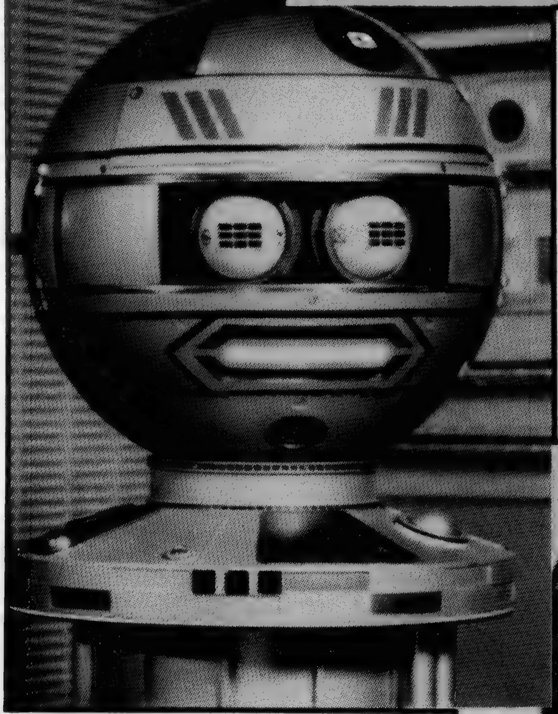
He is aided by Captain Mary Falconer, the pilot of the Terrahawk and second in command of the organisation. Kate Kestrel is the other female of the group and the pilot of the Hawkwing. Her gunnery officer is Hedley Howard Henderson, known as "Hawkeye" from his skills. The last of the Terrahawks is Hiro, the Japanese computer specialist in charge of Spacehawk.

Aiding the humans are a special team of circular robots known as Zeroids. On Earth, the Zeroids are led by Sergeant Major Zero, one of the most advanced of the models. The space detachment on Spacehawk are led by Space Sergeant 101. The robots (designed in Japan, of course!) are the main workers of the group, with many advanced capabilities. One of the most special of the robots is Hudson—a robot Rolls Royce. It can drive Ninestein almost anywhere and has chameleon ability—plus a Microzoid on board, just in case.

As in all of the Anderson series, the machines are spectacularly launched. Battlehawk, like the similar Thunderbird 2, needs room and is launched from within the main house on the base. The front of the house swings forward, the roof opens and Battlehawk blasts out of the jungle. Treehawk, as its name implies, is launched from within a huge, artificial tree. But Hawkwing has the most spectacular launch of them all—from an underground tunnel it is catapulted towards the huge lake, its flight critically controlled by computer. A giant turbine creates a vortex in the waters, through which Hawkwing emerges to leap into the sky. All of these devices serve to conceal the Terrahawks from Zelda's probes on Mars.

TERRAHAWKS





Zelda, too, is served by an impressive array of technology. Her own craft is like a giant, crouched spider, whose nucleus is an inverted cone, capable of independant flight. With her are six large craft that join with her "spider" when it is on the ground to create a spoked wheel base camp. She has two "children" aboard, both almost as ugly and nasty as she is: Yung-Star and Cy-Star, plus several of her own robots, in the form of cubes, with strange glyphs on them.

If the series sounds a little like the rash of Japanese animated series, it still boasts Anderson's detailed approach and magnificent special effects. Whether it will be as popular as his old shows remains to be seen yet, but the preliminary response is very favorable. U.S. representatives are waiting to see how the series does on the British screens before buying it for a network over here, so it may be a while yet before *Terrahawks* is seen in the States. Let us hope that it is only the first in a new series of Supermarionation productions to grace screens on both sides of the Atlantic. For me, as for many other Anderson fans, his works are sorely missed.

Frankenstein

Continued from page 10

Sangster developed an entirely new character for Frankenstein, giving him back his original name of Victor (instead of Henry of the Universal films). With *Curse*, the old viewpoint of the myth was shattered and a new concept was born.

The casting of Peter Cushing as Baron Frankenstein proved to be one of the finest moves since Boris Karloff portrayed the Monster and Bela Lugosi gleefully fanged his victims. From the beginning, Cushing brought something special to the part that, in other hands, might have come across as a "mad scientist", wiping out whoever possessed parts or knowledge he needed simply for the power and joy of killing (as well as vanity... that is, an ego trip of showing everybody what a genius he is).

Cushing's Baron emerged as a man *dedicated* (remember that word!) to the pursuit of knowledge in a time when science was still primitive. In fact, as any fan of the series realizes. Frankenstein was way ahead of his time.... Cushing himself, during his appearance at the John Player Lecture Series, acknowledged this, quipping, "The strange thing is that when he first started these films back in 1956, everything that Frankenstein got up to was pretty impossible, but now Dr. Barnard has caught up. He hasn't gone quite as far as me, because I have transplanted brains. Not very successfully I admit, but we've all got to start somewhere." Sangster's screenplay of Frankenstein walked the line between making the Baron an out-and-out heavy and something of an anti-hero. In Cushing's able hands, Baron Frankenstein became a definite anti-hero.

Sangster's Baron Frankenstein was determined to prove his points, to go beyond the rock-bound limits of the "establishment" of his era. The fact that he's willing to use every means in his power to do so often puts him into collision with the limited thinking of the period. In the eyes of others, this makes him a figure of evil, a monster... of the human variety, that is. In short, for the people of that time, Frankenstein "tampered with things man was not meant to know."

Frankenstein's dedication will take hold of the Baron to the point that he seems ruthless. There is also the immense, unshakable faith that he has in his own abilities and skills, which could be mistaken by some for arrogance and tremendous ego (the latter might be correct to a degree, but that's all a matter of opinion). If you go by the results of his first two experiments, which were done with the help of assistants, it soon becomes evident why Baron Frankenstein places his faith in himself rather than others. There is a Frankenstein-as-God aspect to the story developments, as pointed out by Harry Ringle. Ringle has noted that Cushing "brings to his Frankenstein-as-God extension of the *Curse Of Frankenstein* character a disarming vigor which indicates that he might not do a bad job of running the Universe after all; if only people would cooperate...".

Camera distance is measured by technician prior to filming scene of Christopher Lee trying to kill Peter Cushing. ©Hammer Films

Curse Of Frankenstein's story-line was very different from previous Frankenstein pictures in that, unlike past stories, instead of beginning with the good doctor's experiments in full swing, the film actually begins with what would have to be considered *the* beginning of it all (told in a flash-back style with narration by Cushing's baron from his prison cell). A young Victor, played by Melvyn Hayes, assuming the title of Baron upon his father's death, hires a tutor, one Paul Kemp (Robert Urquhart), to instruct him in practical knowledge and the sciences. It soon becomes obvious why Victor wants to hide pretty much away from the outside... mainly his relatives.

One of the worst is an aunt whose main concern is the continuing of an allowance the late Baron had doled out. She even goes so far as to try to push her daughter Elizabeth at Victor, hinting at marriage. One has the feeling that even if the old bat had an idea of the work young Frankenstein was about to begin, she'd still throw little Elizabeth to the wolves, dismembered organs and all just so that good old "Social Security" keeps rolling in.

We follow Victor growing up, becoming the familiar figure of Cushing. As Victor matures, the originally clean-shaven Paul Kemp develops a beard. Evidently, with the growth of that beard, Paul's thinking begins to decline. He and Victor, in their experiments, bring a dead puppy back to life. His enthusiasm at the success of the project begins to falter when Frankenstein announces that he intends to go one step further before bringing their remarkable work to the attention of the medical and scientific establishment.

Sangster's screenplay builds up to the creature's "birth"... but only when the film is a little more than half-way through the plot. Instead of focusing on the creature and a series of rampages, *Curse Of Frankenstein* follows Victor's increasing dedication (even to the point of killing an aged professor for his brilliant mind) and Paul's increasing horror at the "act against God".

During this, two new elements appear; the obligatory female interest, Elizabeth, and the more down-to-earth "sex" interest, Justine the maid.

Elizabeth is the perfect example of the terrified heroine for this sort of thing; she's pretty, trained to think in the Victorian manner and devoted to Victor, refusing to believe him capable of danger as Paul warns her. In short, she's one of those heroines who won't listen to anyone... and goes nosing about by herself.

Justine provides a good healthy dose of lust! That's right... Lust! The script has Frankenstein definitely showing that he is a human being. While he makes plans to marry Elizabeth, he's also got some action going on the side with Justine (played by Valerie Gaunt, who would display her ample physical charms as Dracula's "bride" in *Horror Of Dracula* the following year), who has plans of her own to become Mrs. Baron Frankenstein... she thinks.

In short, the moral of this little subplot is that man cannot live by playing God alone.

The pace picks up with the creature's "birth". The thing, thanks to damage wrought upon its brain by Paul when he confronts Victor by the old professor's coffin, tries to choke Frankenstein, then goes out and kills an old man and his grandson before being shot in the head by Paul. Of course, Victor will bring the thing back to life, presenting it to a horrified Paul (after he has used it to dispose of Justine who has started to become a nuisance to Frankenstein, demanding that he marry her or else...) who is more than ready to tell all to the police. As the two men fight outside the Frankenstein house, it takes Elizabeth, with her typical (for that period... today it would be different) horror heroine's nosiness to release the creature and nearly become its victim. Victor comes to the rescue (while good old Paul runs for town and the police). It's unfortunate that he wounds Elizabeth while trying to kill the creature, but he does manage to send it plunging into a vat of acid, after setting it ablaze with a lantern.

The end finds Frankenstein (who has been telling the story in flashback) sentenced to the guillotine for the killings committed by the creature... with good old, loyal Paul refusing to admit that such a being ever existed. In fact, Paul has turned into something of a villain himself; he ends up with Elizabeth while Frankenstein faces death with a less-than-enthusiastic attitude.

With this basis, the character of Baron Victor Frankenstein would develop through seven pictures. It would grow and shrink, change and expand, all according to the plot and the whim of the writer. Frankenstein would always be dedicated to his basic task and, thanks to Cushing, retain a definite spark of humanity (very evident in *Frankenstein Created Woman*).

Paul (Robert Urquhart) tries to warn Elizabeth (Hazel Court) that Baron Frankenstein is not to be trusted in "The Curse Of Frankenstein. ©Hammer Films

In his first color chiller, Terence Fisher proved himself more than equal to the task. It is my opinion that in the seven films of the series, the ones directed by Fisher are probably the best of the lot. His eye for the rich, Gothic atmosphere necessary to the Hammer productions that he directed was only one of the many pluses given by film historians specializing in the macabre. Possibly one of the finest directors in the field of the fantastic, Fisher could be said, in most instances, to be able to do more with almost nothing in the way of a plot than most directors could do with a gigantic, multi-level screenplay. In fact, the two failures in the Frankenstein series were directed by other hands.

Jimmy Sangster's screenplay hit upon an adult level, adding terror's first touch of out-and-out sex (for the '50s), ranging from Hazel Court's low-cut gowns to Valerie Gaunt's very low nightclothes. The idea of an affair going on between the Baron and his maid was unheard of. A notable exception to this were the campy, rich "new-old melodramas" starring actor Tod Slaughter, a specialist in movie skullduggery. In most of his stories (such as *Crimes At The Dark House* or *Murder In The Red Barn* (also known as *Maria Martin)),* the devilish Slaughter always had a chambermaid or unwitting innocent in his lustful paws, usually doing them in when they became (a) too annoying or (b) too pregnant.

When *Curse Of Frankenstein* made its debut, its biggest selling point was the fact that it was the first film of its type to be done in color. It was unheard of during the 1950s and audiences were jolted by such sights as Frankenstein examining a damaged brain in a bowl or showing a pair of severed hands purchased from the local morgue attendant. In short, around 1956, this was gore deluxe for the audiences. The era of the "Splatter Film" had not yet arrived. Prior to this, color for the fantastic was aimed at such science fiction epics as *War Of The Worlds, This Island Earth* or *Forbidden Planet.* This was pretty strong stuff for its time... but mild in comparison to what would be unleashed upon the screen.

In the final analysis, *Curse Of Frankenstein* could be looked upon as a foundation piece, not an out-and-out "classic". It is well-made with Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein its strongest point as well as the concrete that holds the film together.

One gets the feeling that while Jimmy Sangster's script blazed new trails for that time, it is still cautiously feeling its way along (although audiences at the time felt that it was anything but cautious in its visual portrayals of Frankenstein's project).

It was, however, a beginning. A beginning that would, in Cushing's own words, "snowball" into the series that it became.

Continued next issue with Revenge of Frankenstein *when The Baron gets a new assistant (Above).* *©Hammer Films*

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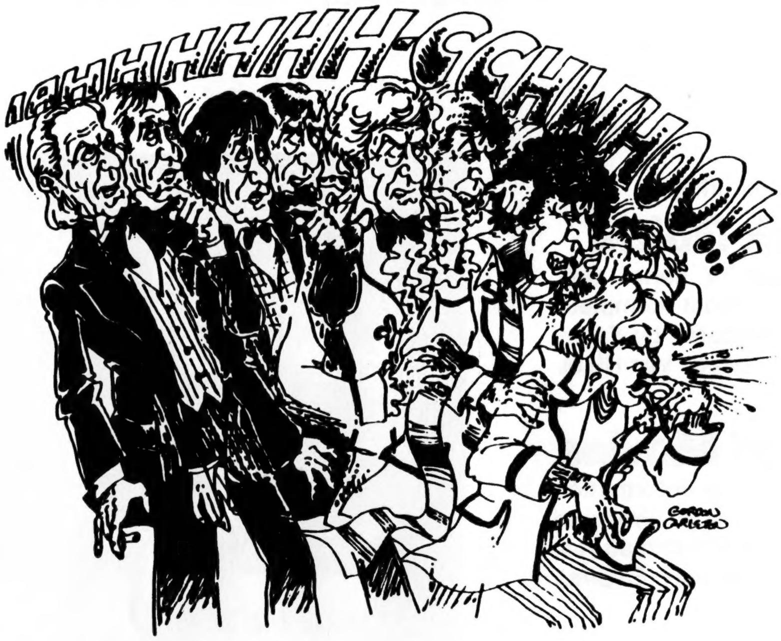

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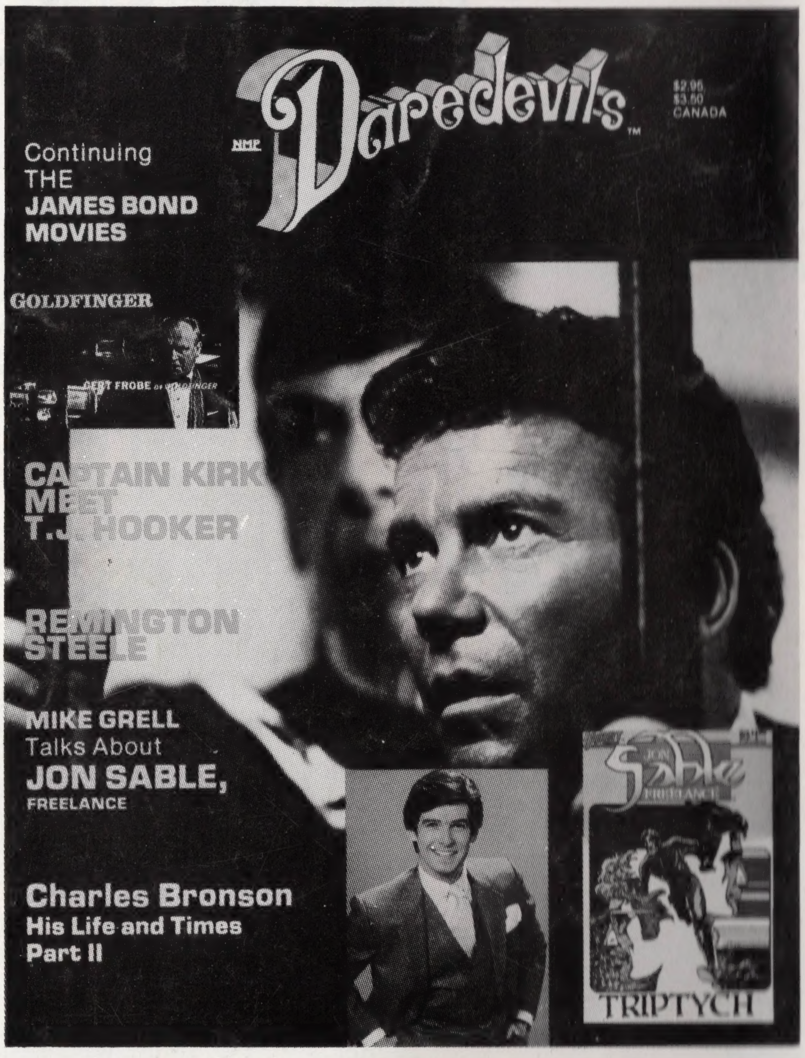
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